

Dozens of Arafat critics arrested

TULKAREM (AP) — Yasser Arafat's security forces have arrested and beaten dozens of Palestinians they suspected of participating in anti-government violence in this city over the weekend, witnesses said Tuesday. Palestinians released from custody said interrogators pulled detainees by their hair, whipped them on their feet or beat them all over their bodies. Many were released after short periods without charges being filed. "They are trying to create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation," said Suleiman Hilal, whose son, Khaled, 18, was picked up by security forces Monday night from his home. Palestinian reporters said convoys of jeeps were patrolling Tulkarem, a city of 40,000, on Tuesday in a show of force. The jeeps' back doors dangled open and officers pointed guns outside. Troops also questioned Muslim worshippers outside the town's mosques.

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King to visit S. Arabia next week

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein will visit Saudi Arabia next week for talks with King Fahd on bilateral relations and the latest developments in the Middle East peace process. Information Minister Marwan Muasher said Tuesday.

Dr. Muasher, briefing the press after a Cabinet session, said the King's visit to Saudi Arabia and talks with King Fahd were "within the context of coordination and consultation between the two leaders."

He said the two leaders were seeking to launch a serious drive to enhance Arab solidarity and support the Middle East peace process. King Hussein visited Saudi Arabia in February and held talks with Crown Prince Abdullah, who is reportedly in effective control of the Saudi government after King Fahd fell sick.

Holiday announced

AMMAN (Petra) — Sunday, Aug. 11, will be observed as a public holiday when all government ministries and departments will remain closed to mark the occasion of the anniversary of His Majesty King Hussein's accession to the Throne, a communique issued by the Prime Minister said Tuesday.

U.S. prepares troop transfer in S. Arabia

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Some 1,200 U.S. troops are being dispatched to Saudi Arabia to prepare a remote Saudi air base for U.S. and allied forces being moved there as a precaution against extremist attacks, the Pentagon said Tuesday. Air force engineers, security forces, and a variety of specialists were being sent from U.S. bases to the Al Kharj air base, Pentagon spokesman Ken Bacon said. Mr. Bacon said the first group had arrived and the rest were due soon. They will be setting up air conditioned tents and other facilities to house the 4,000 U.S. Air Force personnel being moved there from Riyadh and Dhahran over the coming weeks, he said. The United States decided to move its air operations in Saudi Arabia to Al Kharj after a truck bomb at a U.S. military housing complex in Dhahran killed 19 Americans June 25.

Netanyahu to visit France next month

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will visit France at the beginning of September, and meet a delegation of the Jewish institutions of France, the group said Tuesday. "Mr. Netanyahu confirmed to me that he will visit France during the first days of the month of September," the group's president, Henri Hajdenberg, told AFP. "At the time of our conversation, the Israeli prime minister again raised the positive role that France can play in the peace process, especially with regard to Lebanon, in light of the traditional ties France has with that country," Mr. Hajdenberg said.

U.S. under heavy fire for new Iran, Libya sanctions

Russia, Japan and Canada among those joining blanket European condemnation

Combined agency dispatches

RUSSIA AND Japan on Tuesday threw their weight behind Europe's blanket condemnation of a new U.S. bill targeting Libya and Iran as opposition to the move took on a global dimension.

In Moscow, Foreign Ministry spokesman Vladimir Andreyev told Interfax that the "extra-territorial nature of the law contradicts international law and is inadmissible."

The law, known as the d'Amato Amendment, reinforces sanctions against Iran and Libya and provides for penalties against companies, foreign or American, that exceed \$40 million a year in oil or gas related investments in those countries.

"What we need today is practical measures based on international law to coordinate anti-terrorism actions, not unilateral actions that contradict international law," Mr. Andreyev said.

Japan called the law "regrettable" and said it would be in possible violation of World Trade Organization (WTO) rules.

"It is regrettable that this legislation took effect," a Foreign Ministry statement said. "Japan strongly hopes that the government of the United States will be cautious in applying this legislation in the future while maintaining consistency with international law."

In Paris, French officials said the 15 European Union (EU) member-states are considering counter-measures to the U.S. law, talks

on a concerted EU response will be held in the near future after President Bill Clinton signed the bill into law on Monday, said Foreign Ministry spokesman Yves Doutriaux.

He insisted, however, that Washington could still head off retaliatory measures if it wanted to.

"The ball is now in the court of the U.S. administration. It has legislation which would allow it to act concretely and penalise non-U.S. firms, but will it use it. We hope sense will prevail."

In Bonn, German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel told state radio:

"The U.S. intends and laws contradict the basis of the World Trade Organisation and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. We have clearly said we will not accept them."

As could be expected, Iran and Libya were making the most of the growing opposition to the move on Tuesday.

"We think it is more correct to remain in talks with Iran and not to put it into a corner, speechless," but rather to use talks to work against the things that Iran is accused of," Mr. Kinkel told German Radio.

"We know very well what sort of danger emanates from there. We are not blind or of the opinion that everything that happens there is in order, just the opposite," he said, but added it would be a mistake to isolate a country of regional importance.

"I think some of what is going on in America has to be seen as part of the election campaign. But, on the other hand, this is a measure that the Europeans cannot accept," Mr. Kinkel said.

But he added: "As for a dramatic trade war between America and Europe, I am not convinced that everything will be eaten as hot as it's being cooked up."

He said Europeans understood that the United States was still coming to grips with "evil terrorist attacks" that have left Americans eager to punish the culprits.

"We agree with America on most issues," he said. "On the issue of how to treat Iran — with or without talks — we have a different opinion."

In Tehran, Iranian officials praised the European stand against the law and said that the sanctions were "doomed to fail" and would lead to the isolation of the United States.

"Presenting Iran as the culprit after every incident will not help the United States any and will, in fact, be to its detriment," the headline Jomhuri Islami daily said. Libya condemned Washington's move saying it was self-defeating and selfish.

"This measure, which reveals America's selfish reasoning, is a result of Washington's failure to force other countries to strengthen sanctions imposed on Libya" by the United Nations in 1992, the official news agency JANA said.

Switzerland and the

(Continued on page 7)

Arafat assails Netanyahu over settlements, Hebron

RAMALLAH (Agencies) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat angrily accused Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday of "sabotaging the peace process" by authorising new Jewish settlement activity in the occupied territories.

In an unusually harsh attack on the right-wing Israeli leader, Mr. Arafat told a session of the Palestinian legislative council that Israel's decision to lift a four-year-old freeze on settlement expansion in the West Bank and Gaza Strip was a "flagrant violation of all our peace agreements."

He called for a "comprehensive plan" to confront Mr. Netanyahu's hardline policies.

"Yesterday he announced arrogantly in his meeting with King Hussein that he is continuing settlements in the Palestinian territory including Jerusalem," Mr. Arafat said. Mr. Netanyahu made his first trip to Jordan as prime minister on Monday.

"There is a settlement ghoul in Jerusalem...The most important thing is to confront 3 legislative council."

"My brothers we must prepare a comprehensive plan to confront this conspiracy. It is a conspiracy against me, against the peace process. This means tearing up the agreements between us and them,"

Arafat due in Aqaba today

AMMAN (J.T.) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat will pay a brief working visit to Jordan on Wednesday for talks with His Majesty King Hussein, informed sources said. The sources said the King and Mr. Arafat will hold talks in Aqaba.

Mr. Arafat said.

He later said a ministerial committee had been established to craft a strategy to confront settlements.

The legislative council also announced that it would hold a special closed session to discuss ways to confront any settlement expansion, but no date for the meeting was given.

Mr. Netanyahu's government on Friday lifted a freeze on the building of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip imposed by the previous government ousted in May elections.

It said it had taken no decisions on new settlement building but only lifted restraints on expanding existing communities.

Mr. Netanyahu said in Jordan the move provided for "natural growth."

Mr. Netanyahu also told reporters redeployment in Hebron, agreed to by the

previous government in September, could be negotiated if Palestinians honoured other peace deal aspects.

Palestinian legislative council Speaker Ahmad Qunoria, who negotiated the Hebron deal with the previous Israeli government, said there was no room for further talks on that issue.

"We are not ready and it is unacceptable to renegotiate the issues which have been agreed upon...Redeployment from Hebron should be implemented exactly according to the agreement, he said."

Minister of Planning Nabil Shaath said Mr. Netanyahu's approach to Hebron was a ploy "of a government that intends to do nothing" about the peace process, that intends by stealth to start settlement again and is breaking its news gradually, so as not to provoke the anger of the world against its policy."

Mr. Arafat said former Prime Minister Shimon Peres bore some responsibility for the failure to implement the Hebron deal. "He could have handed Hebron to me even after the results of the election. Now the new government is going in circles over Hebron," Mr. Arafat told the council. Israel's elections were on May 29 and

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FIRE IN SAO PAULO: Brazilian police investigators stand beside the corpses, covered by a sheet, of victims of a fire that swept through a housing cooperative which burnt to the ground on Tuesday. Ten people including seven children died in the early morning blaze (Reuters photo)

Israeli soldier killed in Lebanon

TYRE (AFP) — Hizbollah fighters killed an Israeli soldier and wounded two others Tuesday in an attack on an occupied border zone in southern Lebanon, the Israeli army said.

An army spokesman said 20-year-old Sergeant Tehauhu Aslan was killed and the two other troops lightly hurt in a mortar attack on the western sector of Israel's self-declared "security zone."

The army "returned fire to the source" of the attack, which was claimed by Hizbollah, he said.

The attack followed Hizbollah mortar fire on Israeli forces in the zone Monday which wounded two Israeli soldiers, one of them seriously.

Lebanese security sources said Hizbollah guerrillas Tuesday fired 12 mortar shells into a joint post of Israeli troops and their allied South Lebanon

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Syria says it rejects Israeli offer; Assad and Mubarak meet today

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Syria rejected Tuesday an invitation from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to resume immediate peace talks, arguing the offer was worthless because it ignored the principle of land-for-peace.

"The declarations made by Mr. Netanyahu in Jordan do not mean anything. They are just fine words, hollow and hardly serious," the government daily Tishrin said.

"Syria is not convinced by the inconsequential ideas which Mr. Netanyahu is trying to promote under the cover of a resumption of negotiations," the newspaper said.

Mr. Netanyahu urged Syria to resume peace talks on "all outstanding matters" during a visit to Amman on Monday, and revealed that he made an offer to Damascus through the United States.

"If Israel really wants to restart the peace process, it must comply with its obligations and respect its commitments without deviation," Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharaa said.

He was referring to the

Netanyahu briefs Mubarak

ISRAELI PRIME Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spoke by telephone late Tuesday with Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak about the Middle East peace process, Israeli officials said.

The Israeli premier briefed Mr. Mubarak about his talks with King Hussein in Amman on Monday, and the Egyptian leader pledged his commitment to pushing forward the peace process, the prime minister's office said.

land-for-peace principles under which the Israeli-Arab peace talks were launched in 1991.

"The Israeli government rejects the peace process based on land-for-peace and the international (U.N.) resolutions," calling for withdrawal as part of a settlement, Mr. Sharaa said at a cabinet meeting.

Mr. Netanyahu has float-

ed a "Lebanon-first" option whereby Israel and Syria would break the six-month deadlock in their peace negotiations by agreeing on a settlement in Lebanon where both countries have troops. But Syria brushed aside the Lebanon proposal as a side issue which it said showed Israel was trying to "duck out of its peace obligations." It said the main issue at stake was an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

Mr. Sharaa stressed Syrian-Lebanese "solidarity and coordination" in the peace process, adding that the Golan and South Lebanon "form a united front in all (solutions) concerning the area and its security."

Tishrin said: "A resumption of negotiations with Israel is not a problem. The problem lies in the content of the talks."

It questioned why Damascus should agree to more talks "while Netanyahu continues to reject a withdrawal from the Golan, wants to continue with Jewish settlements and welcomes Jewish immigrants

(Continued on page 7)

Netanyahu-Levy feud bursts into open

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — They had put aside their enmity briefly because they could not win power without each other. But by Tuesday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his foreign minister, David Levy, were back to feuding with a vengeance.

Mr. Netanyahu has been shutting Mr. Levy out of top-level diplomatic contacts, foreign ministry officials confirmed. Mr. Levy, fuming over the slap in the face, cancelled his weekly meeting with Mr. Netanyahu and accused the prime minister of breaking promises to him.

"His word cannot be trusted," the Yediot Ahronot daily quoted Mr. Levy as saying about Mr. Netanyahu. "He is so unmethodical and inconsistent it makes me shudder."

The rift underscores the volatility of the Netanyahu government, an uneasy coalition of political enemies as well as right-wing, religious and secular parties with often conflicting ideologies.

Since becoming prime minister, Mr. Netanyahu

has also failed to appoint senior members from his Likud Party to influential positions, instead choosing outsiders and concentrating power in the prime ministry.

Matters came to a boil Monday when Mr. Netanyahu went to Jordan for the first time as prime minister, and did not take foreign ministry staff along.

The exclusion was an insult intended to make public Mr. Netanyahu's policy of sidelining Mr. Levy's office, said a foreign ministry official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The ministry's Jordanian desk was not consulted in planning the visit, the official said.

The official also said Mr. Levy only learned from the news media that Mr. Netanyahu's foreign policy adviser, Dore Gold, had scheduled meetings with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher during a trip to Washington last week.

The prime minister's office has not been sending the foreign ministry transcripts of high-level diplo-

matic conversations on the peace process, the official said.

The ministry was also kept in the dark about the identity of an emissary sent by Syria who visited West Jerusalem last week.

Israel Radio reporter Shlomo Raz said the ministry called him to find out the name of the envoy, identified Tuesday by Israeli newspapers as George Nader, an American of Lebanese extraction.

It was from the United States that the foreign ministry learned that Mr. Gold had tried, unsuccessfully, to arrange a visit by Mr. Netanyahu to Morocco, Israel Radio said Tuesday.

Netanyahu spokesman Shai Bazak dismissed the complaints, saying there was full cooperation between the two offices.

However, Israel Radio said foreign ministry staffers were threatening to stop passing on classified messages from abroad to Mr. Netanyahu's office and to stop issuing diplomatic passports to Mr. Netanyahu staffers.

The acting director gener-

al of the ministry, Eitan Bentsur, denied the report. He ordered senior staffers to "stop crying to the news media."

But others said Israel's foreign policy could suffer once other countries felt the foreign ministry was no longer relevant.

"If people see that they (the foreign ministry staffers) are not brought in to participate, it means they have nothing to contribute and no influence, so they are ignored," said David Kimche, a former director general of the ministry.

Mr. Levy was apparently considering resigning Tuesday, Israel's Channel 2 TV reported. If Mr. Netanyahu did not take steps to resolve his relations with Mr. Levy, the foreign minister would walk out of the government, the report said.

The feud between Mr. Levy and Mr. Netanyahu has been going on since they were rivals for Likud leadership. It reached a peak in 1993, when Mr. Netanyahu admitted in a live television interview,

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U.N. envoy sees new hope to solve Afghan problem

ISLAMABAD (Agencies) — After an initial round of meetings with Afghanistan's warring factions, the United Nations special envoy on Tuesday said there was renewed enthusiasm for the U.N. peace mission.

"There is a feeling that people are looking with new hope at the special mission," U.N. envoy Norbert Holl told reporters in the Pakistani capital.

Mr. Holl recently concluded a series of introductory meetings with the nominal Afghan government in Kabul and rebels in northern and southern Afghanistan.

The new envoy inherited a demoralized peace mission from former U.N. representative Mahmood Mestiri.

Mr. Holl, a German diplomat, last week met with President Burhanuddin Rabbani and Kabul's new prime minister, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. He also visited the rebel Taliban stronghold of Kandahar and the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif, where Uzbek warlord Rashid Dostum is based.

Although Mr. Holl was reluctant to express outright optimism for a peaceful settlement to the four-year-old Afghan civil war, he said there was room for negotiations. "These meetings were not useless," he said.

"There was no refusal to hold dialogue," Mr. Holl told a news conference, a day after a five-hour session with Taliban leaders in their Kandahar base in southwestern Afghanistan.

"I had a good meeting," he said, adding that the militia leaders had received him in a "very hospitable way."

Mr. Holl, who last week criticized Taliban's rocket attack on Kabul, said he told

his interlocutors that the "bloodshed must stop" and Afghans must find a stable political settlement to end the four-year civil war.

During his meeting with the Islamic student-led militia leaders, the U.N. envoy also sought the release of the seven-member crew of a Russian cargo plane detained in Kandahar.

The Taliban seized the Russians and their cargo plane carrying arms and ammunition to Kabul in August last year. The plane, belonging to a private Russian company, was forced to land while flying over Kandahar.

Mr. Holl did not say if discussions on their release were satisfactory.

"They gave a response but still I have to work on it," he said adding that the Russians' release from captivity would remain on the agenda of future talks with the Taliban.

The Taliban allowed him to meet with the Russian crew who were in "reasonable shape," he said.

Mr. Holl's comments came as pro-government Hezb-e-Islami troops battled Taliban rebels in eastern Afghanistan.

State-run Kabul radio said Mr. Hekmatyar's Hezb-e-Islami forces had pushed back advancing Taliban troops in Pakika province, about 100 kilometers south-east of Kabul.

The fighting came after the Taliban claimed to have captured a Hezb-e-Islami military base in Pakika.

Mr. Holl also met former Afghan President Najibullah, cooped up in a U.N. compound in Kabul since his overthrow in 1992. The guerrillas who ousted him will not let him leave.

Israel bars Palestinian from the water talks

BETHLEHEM (AFP) — A Palestinian water expert protested Tuesday that Israeli security agents prevented him from going to an international conference in Stockholm because he refused to give them a copy of the speech he was to give at the meeting. Jad Ishak, head of the Palestinian delegation to multilateral water negotiations and director of the applied research institute in Jerusalem, said he tried to leave Israel early Sunday to give a speech at the four-day international water symposium which opened Monday in the Swedish capital. "When I introduced myself to the security agents

at Ben Gurion airport, one of them began asking me about the conference and about what I would say in my speech," he told AFP.

"She said that water is a security issue and that she should know everything that I was going to say at the conference," he said, adding that senior security officers were called and demanded photocopies of all his documents and speech. Mr. Ishak said he offered to open his bags for inspection but refused to hand over any documents and as a result was prevented from boarding his flight to Stockholm. "This is a violation of academic freedom and human rights," Mr. Ishak said.



ARAFAT IN RAMALLAH: Thousands of Palestinians listen to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat as he delivers a speech in Ramallah Tuesday. In the speech, Mr. Arafat attacked Israeli government decision on settlements expansion and declared Jerusalem the eternal capital of the Palestinians. Mr. Arafat called for unity among the Palestinian people. The banners read in Arabic 'Yes for Abu Amar, yes for the Palestinians' decision' (Reuters photo)

Defiant American activists take medicine to Iraq

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Three Americans headed for Iraq on Monday carrying medicines for Iraqi children for the third time in open defiance of United Nations sanctions and an American ban on travel by U.S. citizens to that country.

The three, members of a group called Voices in the Wilderness, risk up to 12 years in prison and/or a \$1 million fine for violating the sanctions and the U.S. ban but are publicly challenging the U.S. policy towards Iraq.

"We believe that one of the most powerful protests that we can make against the sanctions is to publicly break them by taking urgently needed medical supplies to Iraq," said a statement released by the group.

The three activists, Kathy Kelly, Bradford Lytle and Richard McDowell, are carrying medicine worth \$80,000 to be delivered to Iraqi hospitals.

The group delivered similar supplies to the Al Qadisiyah Hospital in Baghdad in March 1996 in a much publicized event.

"We have fully documented our trip to Iraq and the delivery of the medical supplies," said the group's statement in an open challenge to the U.S. administration. "News stories and pictures from Baghdad constitute incontrovertible proof that we have broken the sanctions for humanitarian purposes," it said.

Food and medicine are exempt from the United Nations sanctions against Iraq, but all deliveries should have prior approval from the U.N. Sanctions Committee. Those without such approval are technically considered as a violation of the six-year-old sanctions.

"The penalty for breaking the sanctions in this way can be 12 years in prison and/or up to \$1 million in fines," said the group. "We believe that this is a small price to pay if it will prevent the death of even one Iraqi child."

Members of the campaign have already received warning letters from the U.S. administration but are ignoring them.

Members of the Chicago-based Voices in the Wilderness are no strangers to the Gulf

crisis, noted Ms. Kelly, who has consistently taken part in many protests in support of world causes and served jail terms for breaking into a nuclear plant in an anti-nuclear demonstration.

According to Ms. Kelly, most American people remain unaware of the "tragic affliction that continues in Iraq."

"Many genuinely concerned people mistakenly believe that these cruel sanctions (against Iraq) have been at least partially lifted, but, in fact, the U.S. has blocked that U.N.-sponsored effort," she said.

"We have publicly demanded in the U.S. that the administration end these moral and unjust sanctions," said Ms. Kelly, whose solemn appearance often belies her steely nerves to confront what she sees as injustice.

"Voices in the Wilderness, supported by 300 hard-core members, launched its campaign for Iraq on Jan. 16, 1996, 'the day which marked the fifth year since the beginning of the military war against Iraq.'"

Ms. Kelly was among a "Peace Group" which

camped along the Saudi-Iraqi border in a vain bid to prevent the Gulf war in early 1991. She has also taken part in marches for peace in the Middle East and to protest Israeli policies.

Voices in the Wilderness is an avowed opponent of the arms race. "We oppose the development, storage and use — in any country — of weapons of mass destruction, be they nuclear, chemical, biological or economic," the group's statement said.

"We advocate active development of non-violent methods of social struggle. It is in this spirit that we invite you to join us in our campaign to end the cruel and immoral sanctions against Iraq," it added.

The three-member mission to Iraq will hold press conferences and give television interviews while in Baghdad before returning to Jordan on Aug. 15. They will visit the offices of the United Nations Development Fund in Amman to deliver a letter to the U.N. reaffirming their opposition to the sanctions against Iraq.

They will also visit the U.S. embassy to "announce the delivery of supplies to Iraq."

Princess Basma praises NGOs, reaffirms support

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma on Tuesday praised the contribution of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to advancing the status of women in Jordan and reaffirmed her support for their efforts to enhance women's participation and role in the society.

During a meeting with a group of women leaders representing NGOs, Princess Basma noted the achievements of women in Jordan and called for intensified efforts to face challenges and meet women's needs.

President of the General Federation of Jordanian Women Nujoud Fawzi praised Princess Basma's

efforts to improve the status of women and noted the important role she played during the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing last year.

Princess Basma discussed with the delegation issues of common concern, including the role of NGOs in preparing women to participate in the next parliamentary elections and the special interpretations of the articles contained in laws and regulations which block women from engaging in political work.

Princess Basma welcomed a suggestion to expand women's committees' membership in the NGOs.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Morocco rebuffs Israeli visits

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Moroccan authorities have rebuffed a request by Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy to visit the kingdom, highlighting unease in Rabat with Israel's new right-wing government, a senior official said Tuesday. "Levy wanted to make an official visit to Morocco but the authorities in Rabat politely rebuffed him by postponing a decision on the trip," the official told AFP on condition of anonymity. He said the Moroccans also refused to receive a foreign ministry official, Yitzhak Lior, who wanted to transmit a message to Rabat from Mr. Levy during a tour of Tunisia and Mauritania last month. The official also said that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu "has still not succeeded in his attempts to speak by telephone with King Hassan," the Moroccan monarch.

UNIKOM faces cutbacks

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — The number of U.N. military observers monitoring the Kuwait-Iraq border will be reduced by 20 per cent by April 1997, a U.N. spokesman said on Tuesday. The 245 military observers of the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) will be reduced to 195 "without affecting the operational requirements of the mission," UNIKOM spokesman Saleem Fahmawi said, confirming a report in the English daily Arab Times. In the Arab Times report, UNIKOM force commander Major-General Gian Santillo said the cutbacks are part of U.N. efforts worldwide to reduce the costs of peacekeeping missions and U.N. agencies. Gen. Santillo said a 775-member Bangladesh infantry battalion, which guards the five border crossings and acts as a rapid response force to border incursions, will be unaffected by the cutbacks.

Israeli journalist exposes security lapse

TEL AVIV (AFP) — An Israeli journalist posing as a hand-capped traveller smuggled a fake gun and bomb onto El Al and Air France flights from Tel Aviv to Paris by hiding the "weapons" in his wheelchair, the Yediot Aharonot newspaper reported Tuesday. The newspaper said its reporter was allowed onto flights both at Paris' Charles de Gaulle airport and Ben Gurion airport outside Tel Aviv without having his wheelchair searched. The newspaper did not provide any additional details, saying it would publish a full account of the episodes in its weekend magazine due out on Friday. The Yediot report comes at a time of supposedly heightened security at international airports following the still unexplained July 17 explosion of a TWA airplane shortly after take-off from New York's Kennedy Airport. The already tight security surrounding flights in and out of Israel was also boosted in April after a militant from the Iranian-backed Lebanese movement Hizbollah succeeded in smuggling powerful explosives into Israel aboard a Swissair flight from Zurich. The man, Hussein Mikdad, lost both his legs and one arm when the bomb blew up as he was handling it in an East Jerusalem hotel room. Israeli reports said he planned to use the explosives to blow up an El Al flight out of Israel.

Deal struck on sharing religious affairs ministry in Israel

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Two of the main religious parties in the Israeli government said Monday they had reached agreement on sharing the religious affairs ministry, ending a dispute which could have threatened the coalition's future.

Under the deal reached by the National Religious Party, which has nine deputies, and the orthodox Shas Party with 10, they will rotate the portfolio between them annually.

Interior Minister Elie Suissa from Shas will hold the post first, followed by Transport Minister Yitzhak Levy. The director general of the ministry will also alternate between the two parties.

Deputies from both parties had threatened to resign from the coalition if they were not given the post first, after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu held onto the portfolio when he announced his cabinet in June.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

15:05The Flintstones
15:30Iris — The Happy Professor
15:40The Adventurers (Sports)
15:55Kelly (Adventures)
16:30Doc. — Earth revealed
17:00French Programmes
19:30News Headlines
19:35Comedy — Evening Shade
20:00Super Stars of Action
20:30Drama — Chancer
21:10Hunter
22:25The Bold and the Beautiful
23:10Bugs

PRAYER TIMES

04:23Fajr
05:49(Sunrise) Duha
12:41Dhuhr
16:22'Asr
19:33Maghreb
21:00Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swifelh. Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366
Anglican Church Tel. 652826
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Amman International Church Tel. 652526
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology. Normal summer weather conditions will prevail with temperatures around average and winds northwesterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate to active and seas calm.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Min./Max. temp. Amman21/33
Aqaba27/39
Deserts19/36
Jordan Valley24/38
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 34, Aqaba 40 Humidity readings: Amman 29 per cent, Aqaba 42 per cent.

Dr. Khalil Al Tusluq757253
Dr. Wafiq Qaddumi893542
Dr. Nasser Ibrahim830432
Dr. Yahya Abdul Rahim836072
Firas pharmacy661912
Ferdows pharmacy890280
Al Asema pharmacy637055
Al Salam pharmacy636730
Yacoub pharmacy644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Nairoukh pharmacy623672
IRBID:
Dr. Mazin Abu Bakir 276852
Al Quds pharmacy(—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Walid Al Akhras995743
Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade617101
Blood Bank775121
Highway Police843402
Traffic Police896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints605800
Price Complaints661176

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, 644281/6
Akileh Maternity, 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali6641646
Italian, Al-Muhajreen

Water and Sewerage Complaints897467
Amman Municipality Complaints787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)121
Overseas Calls010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television773111
Radio Jordan774111
Water Authority680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

ARRIVALS

771101/3
Al-Bashir,775111/26
Army, Marka
.....891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital
602340/50
Amal Hospital
.....674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital
(09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital
(09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital
(09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital
(09)990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital
(02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital
(02)272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital
(02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital
(03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200 where it should always be verified. Information on other flights are supplied on phone 08 (52700) or 08(53250).

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ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
08:00Damascus (RJ)
09:30Jeddah (RJ)
09:40Lamaca (RJ)
10:10Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:50Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
15:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:30Toronto, Montreal (RJ)
18:00Paris (RJ)
18:15Istanbul (RJ)
18:50Madrid (RJ)
19:00Brussels, Geneva (RJ)
19:10Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)
19:15London, Berlin (RJ)
19:15Rome (RJ)
23:00Madrid (add) (RJ)
00:30Beirut (RJ)
01:10Cairo (RJ)
04:25 Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)

Other Flights

12:00Sanaa (IY)
12:15Jeddah (SV)
13:00 Karachi, Abu Dhabi (PK)
13:15Cairo (MS)
13:40Doha, Abu Dhabi (GF)
14:30Tunis (TU)
15:00Vienna (OS)
16:20Algiers (AH)
19:00Dubai (EK)
20:40London, Beirut (BA)
21:10Beirut (ME)
21:40Tel Aviv (LY)
22:35Lamaca (CY)
23:20Amsterdam (KL)
23:30Athens (OA)
03:35Antalia (TK)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:10Madrid (RJ)
11:00Madrid (add) (RJ)
11:00Rome (RJ)
11:15 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:40Berlin, London (RJ)
12:10Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
12:15Rome (RJ)
12:45Istanbul (RJ)
20:30Colombo (RJ)
20:45Beirut (RJ)
21:10Riyadh (RJ)
21:10Cairo (RJ)
21:20New Delhi (RJ)
21:30 Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)
22:00Dhahran (add) (RJ)
22:15Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
01:00Sanaa (RJ)

Other Flights

04:00Amsterdam (KL)
08:45Beirut (ME)
09:15London (BA)
13:00Sanaa (IY)
13:45Jeddah (SV)
14:15 Beirut, Abu Dhabi, Karachi (PK)
14:15Cairo (MS)
14:30Doha, Muscat (GF)
15:30Tunis (TU)
15:50Vienna (OS)
17:20Sharjah (AH)
20:00Dubai (EK)
22:50Tel Aviv (LY)
23:20Lamaca (CY)
00:20Amsterdam (KL)
04:00Athens (OA)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple700/500
Banana600/600
Banana (mukhammar)520/520
Banana (imported)860/600
Cabbage400/300
Carrot170/90
Cauliflower340/220
Cucumber (large)220/120
Cucumber (small)430/260
Eggplant220/140
Garlic650/400
Grapes420/250
Lemon680/400
Marrow (large)250/150
Marrow (small)430/260
Mulukhiyah120/80
Onion (dry)150/80
Okra800/500
Pea500/300
Pear800/500
Peach800/500
Pepper (hot)320/200
Pepper (sweet)380/250
Potato780/520
String Bean780/500
Sweet melon270/150
Tomato120/70
Water melon210/150

House pane pressure on

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Arab and Jewish House of Representatives is under pressure to accept the terms of a peace agreement between the two sides, the Israeli government has announced. The Israeli government said it was "very disappointed" that the House of Representatives had not yet accepted the terms of the agreement. The Israeli government said it was "very disappointed" that the House of Representatives had not yet accepted the terms of the agreement. The Israeli government said it was "very disappointed" that the House of Representatives had not yet accepted the terms of the agreement.

Jordan, PN

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Arab C

patriarc

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House panel demands pressure on Israel

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Arab and International Affairs Committee at the Lower House of Parliament Tuesday urged the co-sponsors of the peace process, the United States and Russia, to force Israel to cancel its decision to expand Jewish settlements in occupied Arab lands.

Stressing that settlements are a serious obstacle to peace, committee chairman Fawzi Toameh said Jordan and other Arab countries believe the expansion of settlements jeopardise all efforts to establish a lasting peace in the region.

"The removal of the

existing settlements in Arab lands is a prerequisite for peace" added Dr. Toameh.

He said Israel's decision Friday to allow the expansion of settlements casts doubt on Israel's commitment to peace.

Dr Toameh appealed to the world community and the UN Security Council "to shoulder their responsibilities towards the establishment of peace and demand that the Israeli government immediately rescind its decision to build more settlements."

He urged the Israeli government to "prove its goodwill" by cancelling the settlement expansion programme.

Unionists present alternative plan to floating of bread prices

Kabariti visits grain silos, discusses compensation mechanism

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Council of Professional Associations Presidents which represents 13 professional unions Tuesday appealed to the government to cancel plans for "rechanneling" bread subsidies and proposed a six-point plan to raise funds which the council says will allow for maintaining the current form of subsidies without incurring a budget deficit.

"In a letter to Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, the council said the impending government decision to float bread prices will put extra burdens on Jordanians and could harm national security."

The government has said it will compensate Jordanians for the three-fold rise in

bread prices, saying that financial constraints make "rechanneling the subsidies" inevitable. It says its plan will save a considerable amount of waste and will ensure that subsidies go to only those who deserve them. The government has already lifted subsidies on animal feed in compliance with an economic reform programme it agreed with the International Monetary Fund.

But the council rejected the government's argument, saying "the change in the form of subsidy would result in sharp price hikes and would further burden the public, especially the limited and low income groups and aggravate the present problem of unemployment," added the letter.

In their appeal, the council members proposed that the government adopt the following procedures in order to raise funds to cover the cost of subsidy on the bread and the animal feed:

1- Imposing additional 10 per cent duty on luxury and non-essential commodities like tobacco, alcohol and marble stone.

2- Levying a 10 per cent additional fee on licences for buildings in the 'A' category areas.

3- Increasing customs duty on cars of more than 2000 cc engine capacity by JD 25.

4- Increasing by JD 5 the departure fees on non-Jordanians travelling by land and by JD 3 on those travelling by sea.

5- Levying a one per cent tax on revenues to hospital, tourist offices, four-star hotels, restaurants and air travel tickets.

6- Increasing the fees for work and residency permits by JD 25 annually.

Furthermore, the council suggested that the government:

1- Announce an austerity programme and sharp cuts in public spending

2- Adopt a clear agricultural policy to secure sufficient quantities of wheat, barley and corn

3- Set up an agricultural council to boost local food production

4- Introduce new legislation on the use of agricultural lands to ensure its most efficient utilisation.

5- Encourage farmers to

develop their rain-fed lands and give incentives and facilities for cereal production

6- Support plans for agricultural extension services and agricultural research programmes.

7- Intensify government control and surveillance at the borders to prevent the smuggling of foodstuffs.

8- Intensify control over bakeries and food warehouses and prevent the use of bread as animal feed.

The council's letter coincided with an announcement Tuesday by Minister of Supply Munir Sobar that he will set the new prices of fresh milk and dairy products by Wednesday or Thursday, pending the results of a study being conducted by a ministry technical committee.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister paid a visit to the grain silos at Jweideh, south of Amman, where strategic quantities of grain are normally stored.

The Prime Minister, accompanied by Mr Sobar, chaired a meeting attended by senior officials responsible for the government-owned automated bakeries and discussed bread quality and prices.

Mr. Kabariti later met Minister of Finance Marwan Awad and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces Marshal Abdul Hafiz Marei Kaabneh to discuss questions related to the provision of the compensation to the public for the difference in the bread prices.

Jordan, PNA open talks on transport deal

AMMAN (Petra)—Transport Minister Naser Lawzi and his Palestinian counterpart Ibrahim Qawasmii Tuesday opened talks on an agreement to organise air transport between Amman and Gaza and a protocol on the implementation of overland transport accord signed by the two sides earlier this year.

Mr. Lawzi said that the talks aimed at facilitating transport so as to promote trade exchange and to remove lingering obstacles to the flow of trade between the Kingdom and the Palestinian self-rule areas.

Mr. Lawzi said that the two sides have not yet agreed on a mechanism for organising the transportation of passengers and goods between the two sides.

Discussions also covered travel across the crossing points at the common borders and the implementation of projects to improve them with funds promised by the German and Japanese governments. The Palestinian National Authority



Transport Minister Naser Lawzi and his Palestinian counterpart Ibrahim Qawasmii Tuesday open talks on an agreement to organise air transport between Amman and Gaza (Petra Photo)

(PNA) official, who arrived across the King Hussein Bridge earlier Tuesday, said that during his four-day visit to Jordan, he will finalise agreements with Mr Lawzi on air and land transport and will meet the directors of the Civil Aviation Authority, Royal Jordanian and the Department of Meteorology to discuss bilateral cooperation.

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Government to raise work permits fees for foreigners

By Roufan Nahhas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — In a move aimed at stemming the flow of foreign labour into the country, the government will raise fees for work permits from JD 300 to JD1,200, according to Minister of Labour Abdul Hafez Shakhaneh.

Dr. Shakhaneh said the government "is determined to halt the flow of foreign labour in order to create employment opportunities for Jordanian workers."

"We have 300,000 foreign workers of whom 30,000 are employed" he said.

He told the Jordan Times that the fees for work permits will be raised by 10-25 per cent for Arab labourers in agriculture, 100-150 per cent for Arab labourers in other fields, and 300-400 per cent for foreign labourers.

In order to ensure access to information about for-

eigners in the country, the government has requested employers and landlords to inform local police station about foreigners residing with or working for them within 48 hours of the foreigners' arrival in the country.

"Violators of the new regulations would pay JD 50-100 fine per day" the minister warned.

The minister said that his ministry would cooperate with the Ministry of Interior or through the issuance of instructions to border police posts to enforce the new regulations.

Visitors will have their passports stamped upon entry with a stipulation that they are banned from taking up employment in the country and requiring them to inform border officers of their residence address during their stay.

"Violators will be expelled from the country and deny re-entry," he said.

Medical products not to be advertised without ministry approval

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — News organisations will be legally banned from running advertisement of medical products without the approval of the Ministry of Health.

The new regulations were issued Sunday by the Press and Publication Department (PPD) which informed newspapers of a decision by Minister of Health Aref Batayneh banning the advertising of medical products before receiving an approval from the ministry.

The ministry's step came in response to recent advertisements that misled the public about the suitability of certain medications to heal from various diseases.

Hashem Jadou, acting secretary general at the Ministry of Health said that the ministry had requested merchants to consult the Ministry of Health before promoting their products in the media but they refused to comply.

"We do not want consumers to get mixed up with a product and its medical effects. Our main objective is to protect the consumers," he said.

According to a ministry official most of the misleading information has been about weight control products, arthritis and echo puncture.

Most of these products could be hazardous or could have side effects, said Dr. Jadou, citing that as another reason why the ministry has moved to control the content of the advertisement.

Arab Orthodox community accuses Jerusalem patriarch of betraying the church, mobilise against him

By Elia Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Jerusalem-based Orthodox Patriarch for Jordan and Palestine Deodoros I has strongly rejected accusations levelled against him by Arab Orthodox priests and laity that he has leased or sold Arab Orthodox property to Israel and has been neglecting church needs.

A spokesman for the patriarch in Amman told the Jordan Times that the Patriarch has never abandoned his responsibilities towards the Arab community, Arab Orthodox priests or church property in Jordan or Palestine — the two areas under his pastoral jurisdiction.

Despite the denial of the accusations, however, there is enough evidence that the patriarch did sell a 14-dunum piece of church property in Jafa to Israel and another 60-dunum piece of property in the town of Khader near the occupied city of Bethlehem to an Israeli firm.

But the patriarchate's spokesman said that the land in Jafa had been on a 99-year lease to an Israeli investor, who has been paying the patriarchate \$100 annually in return.

"Recently an Israeli firm bought over the lease for \$7 million and reached an understanding with the Jerusalem patriarch that it will undertake to build a complex on the land under a 77-year lease during

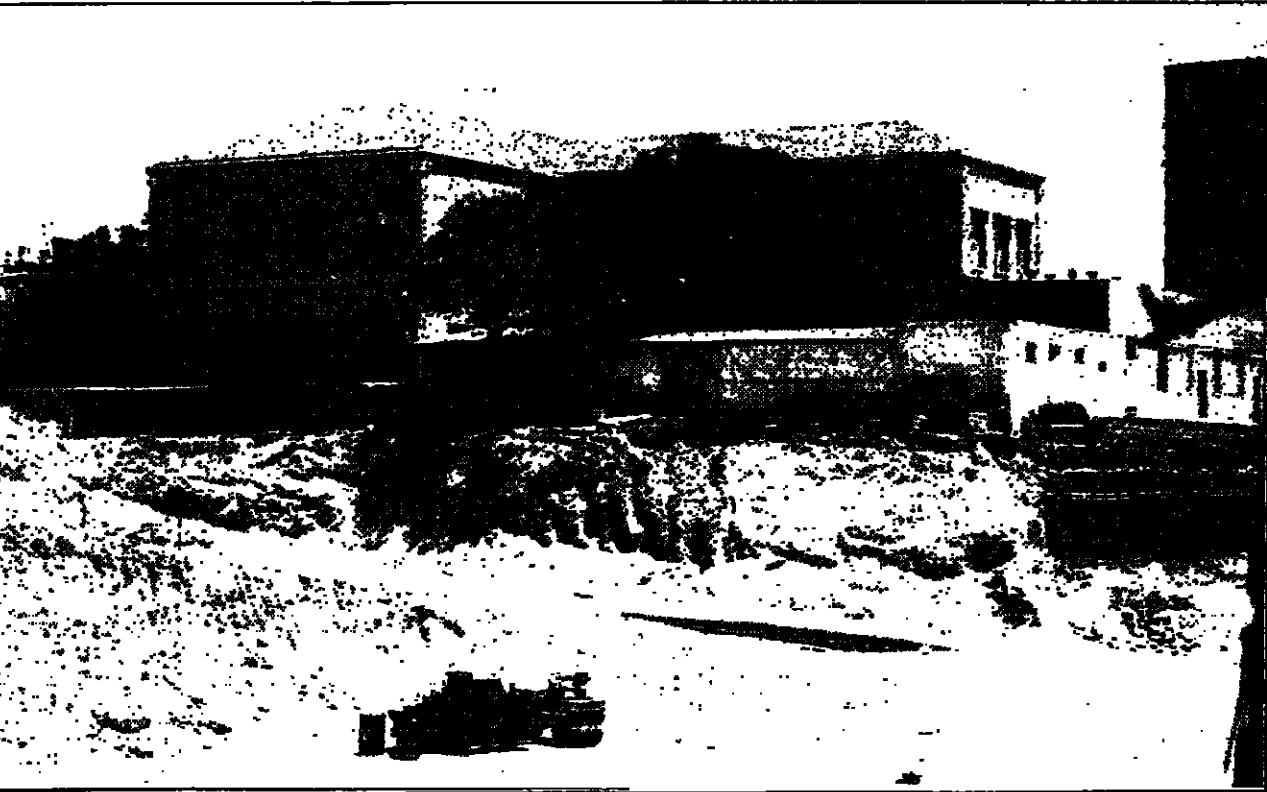
which the patriarchate will take immediate control of 34 per cent of the premises and eventually 100 per cent at the end of the lease," he said.

"As to the lands in the Khader area, they never belonged to the Patriarchate but have been owned by the German Schneller Institution," he added.

A 27-member self-proclaimed "task force" of priests and lay people who say they are dedicated to reform the patriarchate of Jerusalem has accused the patriarch of making anti-Arab remarks in an interview he gave to the Israeli newspaper Haaretz published on Sept. 22, 1992.

The newspaper quoted the Greek Patriarch as saying: "When did the Arabs come here (to Palestine)? The Greeks have been here for over 2000 years. The Arabs arrived only during the 7th century. This is our church, the church of the Greeks. If they (the Arabs) do not accept our laws, they have one alternative — choose another church or establish one of their own."

But the patriarch spokesman has denied that the patriarch ever said that, claiming that the Israeli daily misquoted the Patriarch in a bid to distort the patriarch's image and cause divisions within the Orthodox community. He said the patriarchate and the Israeli government are at odds over the possession of several properties,



An Israeli bulldozer works on the piece of property near the Orthodox Educational Centre in Jaffa which the patriarch of Jerusalem has reportedly sold to an Israeli firm (Photo provided by a member of the task force formed to challenge the patriarch)

including large areas of land close to the St. Elias Monastery near Bethlehem and the St. John Church in the heart of Jerusalem. The Israeli courts are still examining these two cases.

But Father Constantine Nasr, an Arab Orthodox priest and task force member, insists that the Patriarch has abandoned his duties to the church and that the Arab Orthodox community has to mobilise

against him.

"This statement, along with the Patriarch's numerous abuses of his authority as custodian, not owner, of the Orthodox Church and its property in Jordan and Palestine and his selling or leasing of church and Arab Orthodox community property in Palestine to the Israelis, has prompted Arab Orthodox clergy and laity in the Middle East and abroad to form a task force to support the Ortho-

dox Christians in the Patriarchate of Jerusalem to seek reforms and end the Greek minority's domination of the church," He told the Jordan Times. He said that the task force is committed to supporting the awakening movement of the Orthodox Christians in the Patriarchate of Jerusalem in an effort to bring to an end the "catastrophic practices of the Greek leadership."

"The task force which

met last May in Chicago in the U.S. has pledged to meet its commitment by working with Orthodox Christians in the Americas and throughout the world to ensure the continuation of this awakening movement and to strengthen the commitment and faith of Orthodox Christians in the Holy Land," added Fr. Constantine, who is based in the U.S. city of Oklahoma.

Fr. Nasr, whose home-

town is Taybeh near Ramallah on the West Bank, said that "the task force considers the Patriarch's statement to the Israeli newspaper and his selling of Arab Orthodox and church properties to Israel as a 'betrayal of the holy pastoral duties and a falsification of historical facts'."

He stressed that "the Arab Orthodox Christians, who are integral part of the Arab people of Palestine, are the legal owners of their church properties."

"We, as a task force, call upon all Arab political leaders in the region to stand firm and accept nothing short of the restoration of national interests of the Christian Arab citizens," he continued.

Among the task force members from Jordan who attended the Chicago meeting in May were Raouf Abu Jaber, chairman of the Orthodox Society in Jordan and Palestine and Fawzi Toameh, member of the Lower House of Parliament, who reported to the meeting on the recent confrontation between the Orthodox community of Fuhais and the Greek Patriarch of Jerusalem over Arab Christian rights.

Shortly before going to the Chicago meeting, Dr. Toameh told the Jordan Times that "Diodoros was acting in a dictatorship-like manner in dealing with the Arab community, denying the Arabs any role in church affairs, neglecting

church educational institutions and disposing of Arab Orthodox property at will."

Fr. Nasr said that "whereas 86 Arab Orthodox Schools were operating in Palestine in 1922, only 13 remain due to the Patriarch's negligence of his duty, the selling of property to Israel and his disregard to the material needs of the priests and those of the churches and church schools as well."

Fr. Nasr said the number of Orthodox Arab community in Jordan and Palestine is estimated at approximately 200,000 while the Greek hierarchy who are recruited from Greece or Cyprus is less than 100.

But the patriarchate's spokesman insisted that Patriarch Deodoros is continuing to give due attention to the church and the Orthodox properties and is annually paying the priests their salaries in Jordan and Palestine.

He said the patriarch started a general reform programme eight years ago and since then he has ordained seven theological priests and one bishop: Silvestros Al Far, who now serves as assistant to Greek Orthodox bishop Constantine in Amman.

Furthermore, he said that the patriarch established five churches and new schools including the JD 600,000 girls school in Madaba and the Diodoros school in Amman which cost JD 300,000.

On Hiroshima anniversary, Japan renews anti-nuclear vow

HIROSHIMA, Japan (R) — Japan marked the anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing Tuesday with prayers for the victims of the world's first nuclear attack 51 years ago and fresh vows to fight the spread of atomic weaponry.

In what has become a yearly ritual, citizens of Hiroshima and survivors of the nuclear blast joined a ceremony commemorating the exact moment when the bomb was dropped on the morning of Aug. 6, 1945.

Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, reflecting on the continuing struggle to contain the nuclear threat a half century after Hiroshima, told the group he

would keep pushing for the adoption of a global treaty banning nuclear tests.

"Our current priority is to seek early agreement on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)," Mr. Hashimoto said.

"I will make utmost efforts as the prime minister of the only nation that experienced the atomic bomb," said Mr. Hashimoto, who attended the service along with Health Minister Naoto Kan.

More than 50,000 residents and bomb survivors gathered for the service in Hiroshima, in southern Japan, to reflect on the world's first use of nuclear weaponry, which reduced

the city to ruins and left a lingering legacy of radiation-linked disease.

"Humanity and nuclear arms cannot co-exist," declared Hiroshima Mayor Takashi Hiraoka.

"We hope the nuclear experiments which have been conducted over 2,000 times will be ended with the agreement of the CTBT," Mr. Hiraoka said in his peace declaration.

In the past year, Hiroshima has expressed indignation against France and China for conducting nuclear tests when the international community was working to ban them, the latest Chinese test coming only about a week before the

anniversary.

"Now, more than half a century since the cataclysm, the world still faces the threat of nuclear weapons," Mr. Hiraoka said. "We will work together with people around the world to see the CTBT implemented."

India has repeatedly rejected the draft test treaty, saying it contains no commitment by nuclear powers to disarm, while China has also raised objections to certain clauses.

At the start of the Hiroshima ceremony, Mr. Hiraoka dedicated to the cenotaph a new list of 5,030 names of people who have died from the after-effects of the bomb in the past year, bringing the total number of dead to 197,045.

The stone monument carries the inscription: "Please rest in peace as we will never repeat the same mistake."

At 8.15 a.m. (2315 GMT Monday), the city commemorated the moment of the bombing as two children struck the peace bell in the centre of the park and prayers were offered up for the repose of the victims' souls.

The bomb, dropped by the U.S. B-29 bomber Enola Gay, burned almost the entire city and killed an estimated 80,000 people. The death toll rose to more than 140,000 by the end of 1945, but the names of tens of thousands of victims will never be known.

A second bomb was dropped on the city of Nagasaki on Aug. 9 and Japan surrendered unconditionally six days later, bringing World War II to an end.

"Burned and tattered clothing... A tricycle melted by the heat... A watch stopped at 8.15... When we see how a single bomb turned the whole city of Hiroshima into a scorched plain, we understand what a horrifying weapon the atomic bomb is," said Marie Ishihara and Seijun Sasaki, two children representing the future of Hiroshima at the service.

In the evening, Hiroshima citizens will float some 10,000 paper lanterns down rivers running through the city to console the souls of those who died.



Anti-nuclear protesters stage a die-in demonstration in front of the symbolic skeleton A-bomb dome in Hiroshima Tuesday to mark the 51st anniversary of the world's first atomic bomb blast on this city (Reuters photo)

Amnesty accuses Burundi army of new killings

NIGERIA (R) — Human rights group Amnesty International has accused the Tutsi-led army of killing more than 200 Hutu civilians in Burundi since seizing power in a coup just under two weeks ago.

"Despite claims by the new Burundi military leader, Major Pierre Buyoya, that he wants to stop genocide in Burundi, massacres by government forces and armed groups continue unabated," the London-based organisation said in a report published Monday.

It alleged that government forces killed 110 Hutu civilians at Carama, near the capital Bujumbura on July 26, the day after the army deposed Hutu President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya.

Amnesty also said 100 people were killed by army troops at Shumba in central Burundi.

Amnesty did not identify its sources for any of the alleged massacres.

Maj. Buyoya, who says he is more of a democrat than his rivals in the troubled central African country, justified his coup d'etat by saying that only the army could save Burundi from genocide.

More than 150,000 people have died in ethnic violence between Tutsis and Hutus in Burundi since 1993.

Kenya Tuesday cut all communications links with Burundi in line with a decision by a group of African countries to impose an economic blockade on the strife-torn country to protest the military-backed coup there.

A government statement obtained by AFP said all air, rail and road links and the movement of people and goods to and from Burundi were being suspended with immediate effect.

Seven African nations resolved, during a meeting in the northern Tanzanian town of Arusha last week, to exert "maximum pressure" including "the imposition of economic sanctions" in the wake of the coup on July 25 by Burundi's Tutsi-dominated army.

"Although the Kenyan government recognises that the innocent citizens of Burundi may suffer as a result (...) we in Kenya view these sanctions as unavoidable sacrifices needed to arrest further deterioration of the situation in Burundi," a government statement said.

Burundi's southern neighbour Tanzania was the first African nation to implement the sanctions, with an announcement Friday that all trade and other economic links with Burundi had been cut.

Tanzania has been stopping lorries of produce getting into Burundi, a move expected to cripple the landlocked country which depends on Dar Es Salaam for most of its imports and exports.

Kenya's port of Mombasa also handles some of Burundi's exports and imports.

Dar As Salaam said Monday that it had ordered state-owned Air Tanzania to stop flying to the Burundian capital Bujumbura.

Japan epidemic declared contagious disease

TOKYO (R) — Japan officially declared the food poisoning germ that has been sweeping the country a contagious disease Tuesday, invoking a rarely used law to give authorities greater powers to contain the illness.

The invoking of the Infectious Disease Prevention Law for the first time in two decades came amid mounting concern about undue public alarm, with reports of sufferers facing discrimination and bullying.

"The government bears a great responsibility to protect the lives of the public and maintain the health of people," top government spokesman Seiroku Kajiyama told reporters as the outbreak was formally declared a contagious disease.

The O-157 colon bacillus responsible for the food poisoning epidemic has killed seven people and afflicted more than 9,000 patients this year. The city of Sakai near Osaka in western Japan has been hit hardest, with 6,500 patients, mostly schoolchildren, coming down with the disease.

Although patients will not be quarantined, doctors will now be required to report cases of the bacteria to local health authorities while people exposed to the risk of infection, such as the families of victims and food industry workers, will be required to undergo medical examinations.

"Although the designation of the food poisoning as an infectious disease may constrain human rights to some extent and damage some industries, we have no option but to emphasise the eradication of the epidemic," Mr. Kajiyama said.

But the move could add fuel to the problem of discrimination, despite government assurances that the rights of patients will be protected to the fullest possible extent.

"A woman called this morning worried that neighbours will find out her family has O-157 if people come to disinfect her house," said a spokesman for Sakai.

Concerned about increasing reports of discrimination and bullying of schoolchildren who have caught the germ, the city has already set up a task force to tackle the phenomenon.

"People called in to say they were turned away from a hotel just because they were residents of Sakai," a Sakai health official said, citing one case of discrimination.

Japanese media have also been carrying reports of parents telling schoolchildren to avoid friends who have fallen victim to the bacillus and of obsessive hygiene.

"My mother told me not to play with my friends who have left the hospital at least for another month," said one 10-year-old schoolboy in Sakai speaking on Japanese Television.

To protect the privacy of the patients, the results of health examinations will be sent only to the individual.



An International Red Cross official together with local North Korean Red Cross workers weigh the sacks of wheat flour in North Korea before distributing to local residents affected by the recent floods. North Korea is reported to be on the brink of famine after devastating floods hit large parts of the country (Reuters photo)

Red Cross warns North Korea is on a knife's edge

BEIJING (AFP) — Heavy flooding has pushed North Korea's food supplies to breaking point and its ability to keep its people alive is in the balance, a Red Cross official said Tuesday.

"The country is on a knife's edge," warned Geoff Dennis, the Pyongyang representative for the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

"Last year's flooding has left North Korea extremely vulnerable to climatic changes and this year around 60 per cent of the rice harvest has been lost in the worst affected areas," he told AFP in Beijing after flying in from Pyongyang.

Mr. Dennis, who spent 10 weeks in North Korea overseeing the federation's rice supplies to 130,000 left destitute after last year's inundations, said people in the countryside were eating anything edible while those in Pyongyang were combing parks and woods for roots to cook.

"Generally speaking throughout the country, there is not enough to eat," he said, adding that many in the southern flood-hit areas were subsisting on two small bowls of rice a day.

According to other Westerners recently returned from the Stalinist nation, state television has also been showing people how to cook grass and roots after

the evening news.

Since three days of heavy rains hit the richest agricultural land in the south of the nation last week, more people have been left destitute and without a harvest for the second year running.

Although Mr. Dennis emphasised that the flooding was far more localised and less severe than last year, the nation's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said Monday that heavy damage had been wreaked by the new flooding, with 475-730 millimetres (19-29 inches) of rain falling on North and South Hwanghae and South Phyongan provinces and Kaesong Municipality.

It said the road and railway line to Kaesong were cut while "dwelling houses, public buildings, coal and ore mines and other factories, facilities and paddy and non-paddy fields have been submerged, buried or washed away."

"This situation is not as bad as Somalia or Rwanda as people are not actually dying, but it is near the top of the priority list as we can help now before the situation deteriorates," Mr. Dennis said, adding that Red Cross assistance so far had prevented deaths from starvation.

Mr. Dennis visited South Hwanghae twice since the recent flooding, where he reported 43 deaths. He was

unable to reach Kaesong, the city nearest the border with South Korea where KCNA reported serious damage.

Mr. Dennis said he expected the death toll to rise from the current 47, which includes four bodies washed into South Korea, but warned that the main danger would not arise until March next year, when this year's meagre harvest — predicted to be at least 20 per cent below average — runs out.

"There are longer term structural problems that remain," he said, pointing to the massive drop in trade and aid from Russia since the collapse of the Soviet Union and declining trade with North Korea's other major ally, China.

North Korea was hit by serious flooding in 1994 and then a disastrous scenario in 1995 when its worst floods in a century wiped out half the harvest.

A U.N. appeal for \$43.6 million to cover emergency situations from July 1 to March 31, 1997 has so far received pledges worth 55 per cent of the total.

The federation's \$9.25 million appeal to supply flour to 130,000 beneficiaries between April and the harvest in late October has received 65 per cent coverage.

Philippine rebels withdraw after army ultimatum

ZAMBOANGA, Philippines (R) — About 200 Muslim rebels Tuesday yielded to an army ultimatum and began pulling out of two villages they had seized on Limaog Island in the southern Philippines.

The decision to withdraw defused tension in the area as government and rebel representatives were completing a peace agreement aimed at ending a 24-year revolt for Muslim self-rule in the southern Mindanao region.

Abdul Sarin of the insurgent Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) announced the guerrillas' withdrawal as the 24-hour deadline set by the military for them to pull out or be ejected by force lapsed at 2 p.m. (0600 GMT).

"I ordered them to withdraw from the area," Mr.

Sarin told reporters.

Mr. Sarin, the MNLF representative to a joint committee supervising a ceasefire between the government and the MNLF, said the pullout began a few hours before the ultimatum expired.

The military said navy ships had blockaded the island off Zamboanga and that 15 truckloads of army troops were on their way to the villages when the guerrillas began withdrawing.

More than 2,000 Christian and Muslim residents fled to a nearby town after the rebels seized the villages Thursday.

MNLF Chairman Nur Misuari said Monday that Limaog had been a traditional rebel area and that some of his forces had gone there for retraining.

Government officials said they expected a peace

agreement ending the MNLF-led revolt to be signed in Jakarta in two weeks.

The deal, which calls for the creation of a rebel-led council to supervise development in 14 southern provinces, has provoked widespread protests from Christians in the south.

Indonesia chairs a panel of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) which has been mediating the peace talks.

The country's five million Muslims regard Mindanao as their ancestral home although they have become a minority in the area after decades of Christian migration.

More than 120,000 people have died in the rebellion since it broke out in 1972.

Love-lorn man begs tiger to eat him

HONG KONG (R) — A Shanghai man, unlucky in love, climbed into a tiger's cage at the city zoo, knelt in front of the beast and begged it to eat him, the semi-official China News Agency said Tuesday. The tiger obliged by knocking him down, sniffing his head and then taking a bite at his neck. Screams from horrified visitors attracted help and a veterinarian shot the tiger full of sedatives and rescued the man, the semi-official news agency said. The man survived.

Double or quits at Thai altar

BANGKOK (R) — A vow by two women never to be separated has made Viroj Bamrungsri the envy of many Thai men. Mr. Viroj, a 29-year old factory worker, plans to marry Amphon Chulaayarnuang and her best friend Nookal Ramangthong this week, local newspapers reported Monday. Mr. Viroj originally proposed to Amphon, 34, but she set a condition to her agreement — he must also marry Nookal. Amphon said Nookal was her closest friend and the two had made a vow before a sacred statue years ago to remain together until death, the Nation newspaper reported. One condition of the pact was that if either of them was to marry, they must both marry the same man. Bigamy is officially illegal in Thailand but the trio said they would live together as common-law partners.

'Britons drinking more at home than in pubs'

LONDON (R) — British beer drinkers increasingly prefer to imbibe at home rather than in pubs, bars and restaurants, a report by market analysts Euromonitor said Friday. Sales from stores or off-licenses rose 14 per cent between 1991 and 1995 to £2.0 billion last year, the report said. This was part of a wider trend which saw overall spending on alcoholic drinks in Britain rise 19 per cent to £25.8 billion, between 1990 and 1994. But British beer consumption is rising at a slower rate than in some other Western countries. Spain topped the growth league in 1995, with an 8.6 per cent increase over 1994, followed by the U.S. With 7.0 per cent growth, Italy with 5.6 per cent and then Britain with 5.4 per cent.

Man tries to sell \$3.5m in fake art

NEW YORK (R) — A convicted con man was charged with attempting to sell \$3.5 million worth of fake art by masters such as Matisse and Renoir, the Manhattan U.S. attorney said Monday. Laurence Groeger tried to sell counterfeit works by Roy Lichtenstein and Pierre August Renoir and succeeded in passing off fakes by Fernando Botero, Henri Matisse and Andy Warhol, the complaint said. One potential victim was saved when he noticed that a Lichtenstein painting bore a signature, which was uncharacteristic for the artist. On several occasions, Mr. Groeger used preliminary estimates from Sotheby's auction house to bolster his claims, the complaint said. He phoned Sotheby's to describe, for example, the Lichtenstein painting and asked for a fax with an estimate of its value, put at between \$1.5 million and \$2 million, "pending first-hand inspection" by the auction house. A spokesman for Sotheby's said that they provided free, conditional appraisals for auction purposes, but were not responsible for how they were used. He also tried to exchange the same painting, and then fake works by Botero and Renoir, for a \$2 million house in Anguilla, West Indies, the complaint said.

IDB approves 37 loans for a total of JD10.8m

AMMAN (R) — The Industrial Development Bank of Jordan (IDB) approved 37 loans worth a total of JD10.8 million for various industrial and commercial projects in Jordan.

Lebanon cargo carrier suspends all activities

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon's largest cargo carrier, the TWA, suspended all its activities after a court ordered the company to be liquidated.

The court's decision came after a long legal battle between the company and its creditors.

The court's decision was a blow to the state-owned TWA, which had been struggling for years.

TWA's assets are being liquidated, and its employees are being laid off.

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Sri Lanka battle drags on; Tiger headquarters razed



Sri Lankan troops stand for a briefing at Paranthan by their officers before resuming their assault on Kilinochchi. Sri Lankan army and rebels report fierce battle for northern Tamil Tiger-held town in which 300 troops and guerrillas may have died and 200,000 civilians been made homeless (Reuters photo)

COLOMBO (AFP) — Fighting raged in northern Sri Lanka for the third straight day Tuesday as Tamil rebels fiercely resisted an army onslaught against their razed political headquarters, officials said.

Intense air raids and artillery attacks pounded the town of Kilinochchi where the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) had recently moved their offices, the rebels said in a statement.

They said they were putting up ferocious resistance and claimed to have destroyed six tanks that were providing cover to infantry troops marching on Kilinochchi.

The official death toll among government forces rose Tuesday to 31 killed and at least 50 wounded but the LTTE had placed the army's losses at "more than 100" killed in the first two days of fighting alone.

The Defence Ministry said 203 Tiger guerrillas were killed in fighting up to Monday and another 100 wounded. Both sides said a large number of bodies were strewn in rice fields but denied the dead were their fighters.

The ministry said close air support was being given to ground troops which had moved within three kilometres from Kilinochchi after launching the offensive Sunday from the nearby smaller town of Paranthan.

"The Sri Lankan Air Force continued to engage terrorist positions in depth causing severe damage to identified terrorist locations," the ministry said in a statement.

It said troops resumed an advance towards the LTTE-held town of Kilinochchi at first light Tuesday, the third day of the operation code-named "Sath Jaya" or true victory.

The LTTE said government forces tried to penetrate rebel defences but were halted by a counter-attack.

The Tigers had moved to Kilinochchi after losing their former citadel of Jaffna to security forces who mounted a series of operations to take the entire northern peninsula.

Heavy aerial bombardment had reduced Kilinochchi to rubble, the Tigers said.

"There are no worthwhile buildings left (in Kilinochchi)," the LTTE said. "Artillery shells and aerial bombs have reduced all concrete structures to heaps of rubble."

However, the town remains beyond the reach of armed forces, the Tiger statement said adding the security forces were hitting civilian targets nearby.

Some 200,000 Tamil civilians in Kilinochchi displaced by the fighting were fleeing further southwards and were facing a food shortage, the Tigers said.

The offensive to take Kilinochchi, located south of Jaffna peninsula, was launched after the Tigers overran an army garrison in the north-east.

The government has yet to admit its major debacle at Mullaitivu where some 1,300 security personnel are believed to have died resisting a Tiger onslaught last month.

The national parliament is expected to debate the Mullaitivu setback Wednesday and Thursday following a call from the opposition for more details.

The battle for Kilinochchi erupted after government forces consolidated at Paranthan, 60 kilometres north-west of Mullaitivu. Taking Paranthan cost the lives of 16 soldiers and 54 rebels by official count.

Tiger guerrillas are leading a campaign for independence in the island's northern and eastern regions where the two million Tamil minority is concentrated. More than 50,000 people have died in the past 23 years.

Chechen rebels storm into Grozny and other towns

GROZNY, Russia (R) — Rebels stormed into Grozny and two other towns in break-away Chechnya early Tuesday in their biggest offensive in five months against Russian troops they view as an occupying force.

Russian helicopter gunships responded by raining rocket and heavy machinegun fire on new rebel positions in the centre of the Chechen capital, which was home to 400,000 people before Russia sent troops into the region in December 1994.

As the fighting flared, ITAR-TASS news agency said President Boris Yeltsin was returning to work to discuss the Chechnya situation after resting for three weeks in a sanatorium following his July 3 reelection.

The Russian helicopters, known as "Crocodiles", attacked in waves, apparently flying away periodically to reload their guns. Their fire seemed to be concentrated on the railway station and the centre of the city.

A burnt-out Russian armoured personnel carrier near the compound of the pro-Moscow Chechen government bore witness to the ferocity of the fighting.

Russian officials said seven servicemen had been killed and almost 50 wounded. There was no information about casualties among the rebels, who want a separate Chechen state.

"The situation in Chechnya is worsening rapidly," Interfax News Agency quoted a Russian military official as saying.

More than 30,000 people have died since the fighting in Chechnya began and the latest clashes raise new question marks over the already fragile peace process in the Caucasus region.

A rebel representative told Interfax that separatist forces had entered Grozny to launch "a special operation aimed at neutralising the occupational troops of the Russian Federation."

He said rebels had also entered the towns of Argun and Gudermes, on the main road linking Chechnya with the neighbouring region of Dagestan.

An official with the pro-Russian Chechen government confirmed the attack on Argun. The rebels said they had taken Gudermes without fighting, but this could not be confirmed.

Tension had been high in Chechnya before the raids, amid rumours that the rebels were poised for a new offensive.

Separatists accused Russia of indiscriminate bombing raids in the south and south-east of the region and said many civilians had been killed.

Russian troops, sent to Chechnya to crush an independence bid, seized Grozny in February 1995 after bitter fighting which left most of the centre of the city in ruins.

But rebels briefly captured parts of the city in March in an attack which humiliated the Russian forces.

Witnesses said the latest clashes were concentrated around the government building in the centre of Grozny.

The sound of grenade launchers, heavy machineguns and automatic rifles echoed round the city and Russian planes and helicopters flew overhead. Interfax said Russian fighter planes were attacking rebel positions outside the town.

Both sides have routinely exaggerated achievements in the Chechnya fighting and casualty figures can rarely be confirmed.

"Today's provocation in Grozny shows that the rebel leaders...do not want peace and accord and they are indifferent about the interests of the Chechen people," Interfax quoted Nationalities Minister Vyacheslav Mikhailov as saying.

Mr. Mikhailov is the head of a Russian delegation visiting Grozny to assess the peace process. But there have been few signs of compromise and of new rounds of talks.

A series of ceasefires have collapsed, with each side accusing the other of violating the truce, including one agreed in May and June in the run-up to Russia's presidential election.

Meanwhile a senior Russian official said Tuesday no further peace talks were possible with Chechen rebel leader Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev and his military Commander Aslan Maskhadov who had ordered a raid on the Chechen capital.

Interfax News Agency quoted Sergei Stepashin, secretary of the Russian State Commission on Chechnya, as ruling out any personal contacts with the two top rebels. He compared them to "international terrorists" and said they would be prosecuted in accordance with the law.

Mr. Maskhadov told Ekho Moskvy radio station his forces had launched the operation against Russian forces in Grozny to force Moscow to the negotiating table.

"Those who want to end this war should understand that the option of force should be dropped, that the road of peace outlined in the Moscow and Nazran agreements is the only way," rebel Chief-of-Staff Aslan Maskhadov told Ekho Moskvy radio.

Mr. Maskhadov was referring to two truce accords reached in May and June when President Yeltsin was fighting for reelection. The truce collapsed shortly after Mr. Yeltsin won another term in office.

Graft trial seen as boost for S. Korean president

SEOUL (R) — President Kim Young-Sam's drive to purge the graft that tainted his predecessors will gain from the prosecution demand that former President Chun Doo Hwan be punished with the death penalty, analysts said Tuesday.

But they said it was very unlikely Mr. Chun would face the hangman's noose.

"How the court will handle this case remains to be seen, but the prosecution's demand for such a sentence is...a boost to President Kim's ruling party ahead of the presidential election next year," Yoo Se-Hee, a politics professor of Seoul's Hanyang University, told Reuters.

Prosecutors asked a Seoul court Monday to sentence Mr. Chun to death on charges of mutiny and treason, stemming from a 1979 coup and a 1980 army massacre of pro-democracy campaigners in the city of Kwangju, as well as bribery.

They also sought a life sentence for Mr. Chun's successor and military academy classmate Roh Tae-Woo on similar charges and imprisonment ranging from 10 years to life for 14 other former army generals.

The unprecedented trials took place in the wake of President Kim's campaign to "put history to rights."

"The most important thing is not the prosecutors' demand itself but the historic meaning of this trial," said Lee Chung-Hee, a professor at the Korea University of Foreign Languages.

"From now on, establishing a government through illegal means will disappear from our politics," he added.

Senior Prosecutor Kim Sang-Hee told the court Monday that Mr. Chun and Mr. Roh, both retired four-star generals, must be severely punished so that "this trial will serve as a historic landmark by showing that laws and justice rule this land."

He also sought fines of 283.9 billion won (\$349 million) for Mr. Roh and 222.3 billion won (\$273 million) for Mr. Chun for bribes they took from businessmen during their presidency. Mr. Chun ruled South Korea from 1980-88 and Mr. Roh from 1988-93.

Mr. Kim, the first president without a military background in three decades, has been riding on a national wave of revulsion against the corrupt excesses of his military-backed predecessors since he took office in February 1993.

Dole bows to demands of anti-abortion activists

SAN DIEGO (R) — Republican anti-abortion activists Monday forced presidential hopeful Bob Dole to bow to their demands to strengthen the wording of the party's proposed platform on the divisive issue of abortion.

A deal brokered by Illinois Congressman Henry Hyde in a day of closed-door negotiations headed off a threat by anti-abortion forces to foment open rebellion at the party's national convention next week.

Under the accord, Sen. Dole's camp agreed to restore the stronger language of the Republicans' 1992 anti-abortion plank and water down a "tolerance clause" in the platform.

It was a major defeat for Sen. Dole, who had originally tried to send a clear signal to moderate voters that the Republican Party is open to Americans who favour abortion rights.

It was the third time in less than a month that Sen. Dole had capitulated to the demands of the Christian right — a powerful faction within the party — on the abortion issue.

Claiming victory, anti-abortion forces dropped their threat to bring the issue to a public fight next week on the convention floor, a battle that could have proved embarrassing to Sen. Dole during his moment in the national spotlight.

"This is a big win for the pro-family movement," Ralph Reed, head of the Christian Coalition, told reporters.

But while Sen. Dole appears to have defused one major crisis only a week before the start of the San Diego convention, he faces the risk of a potentially damaging challenge from moderate Republicans determined to soften the party's official stand against abortion.

The dispute over abortion, looming as the most contentious issue of the 1996 convention, flared during the first day of platform committee meetings to finalise the guiding principles Sen. Dole will carry into the campaign against President (Bill) Clinton.

The final document will be approved next Monday, the first day of the Republican National Convention in San Diego.

The abortion issue crossed a major hurdle Monday when the platform sub-committee approved a strict anti-abortion plank containing most of the changes that anti-abortion activists had sought.

The proposal was passed by voice vote, with members overwhelmingly in favour and even breaking into boisterous cheers when the final amendment was passed. The proposed plank restored most of the tougher language contained in the 1992 platform and reaffirmed the party's call for "a constitutional amendment banning abortions."

In the clause calling for an "open door" to Americans with differing views, the words "tolerance" and "abortion" were deleted from Sen. Dole's proposed version, and the final language was left vague and unspecific.

Anti-abortion delegates had so much support on the platform committee that Sen. Dole felt compelled to further water down his "tolerance" proposal.

In Antarctic, fellows, not weather, is biggest strain

CAMBRIDGE, England (R) — The nights last for months, it's 70 degrees below zero and you are stuck in a small room with a guy who constantly scratches his beard.

It's enough to drive anyone crazy, and scientists now say life in the Antarctic may make people physically ill.

Scientists meeting in Cambridge, England, this week at joint sessions of the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research and the Council of Managers of National Antarctic Programmes will swap stories about their strategies for coping.

Mission managers and doctors will discuss the medical and health factors of putting together an expedition.

"It's not the cold that's the problem — it's living with your fellows," said John Dudeney, a physicist with the British Antarctic Survey. "These are people you wouldn't have chosen as friends and you have to live with them in this environment that you can't escape."

In the summer up to 100 people may be in a camp at a time, but during Antarctica's long winter nights numbers fall to between 10 and 20.

"You have to cope with their foibles, and these may be foibles as petty as the way they hold a spoon or always stroke their face," Mr. Dudeney said.

Dr. Des Lugg, with the Australian Antarctic Division, said the sense of being trapped could be strong. "It's self-imposed incarceration, not far removed from prison."

More often, an Antarctic mission is compared to being in space. Much of the research being done on responses to Antarctic missions is being studied by the U.S. space agency NASA and European Space Agency experts.

"It has huge ramifications for space flight," said Dr. Wendy Haston, head of research at the British Antarctic Survey's Medical Unit.

"It is still very, very much a separate place from everywhere else in the world," Mr. Dudeney said. "It is much more severe than the Arctic. And you can't go and buy a plane ticket and get anywhere."

So how do they deal with it? "It's self-discipline — seeing the other guy's point of view," said Mr. Dudeney, who has been visiting the Antarctic for 30 years.

Being humble helps, too. "You quickly discover that the person who is important is the person who keeps the electricity going. Everyone relies on everyone else. You have to pull your weight."

Paul Rose, base commander at Britain's Rothera Research Station, said candidates were carefully screened, although this did not go as far as administering psychological tests.

"Even the roughest person in Antarctica, you'll find them with a high degree of interpersonal skills," he said.

Nonetheless the problems can manifest themselves in physical symptoms. Dr. Lugg said he would present findings that Antarctic workers have suppressed immune systems, although no specific diseases have occurred.

In addition, certain viruses that are usually present in the body, such as some strains of herpes, have become more active in Antarctic workers. Dr. Lugg said it was not clear why.

"We have no explanation at this stage. It could be in with the increased ultraviolet radiation." Antarctica is where the hole in the ozone layer first showed up — a hole that lets damaging solar radiation through.

However, just being cooped up could do it. "It's very common to experience immunosuppression with stress," said Haston.

Dr. Lugg said experts were studying whether Antarctic workers were more susceptible to disease when they came back. The psychological differences were already well-known, he said. "They come back different."



Bar codes similar to those used at supermarket check-outs glued to the beaks of penguins could provide clues to how the world's environment is changing, biologist said at a meeting of Antarctic researchers in Cambridge, England. Scientists have been searching for a way to follow individual penguins — not easy in huge flocks of identical, waddling black-and-white birds. In the file photograph a U.S. Navy technician lies on his stomach to photograph a penguin on Antarctica's Ross Ice Shelf (Reuters photo)

Indonesia's Megawati plans more legal battles

JAKARTA (R) — Indonesia's ousted opposition leader Megawati Sukarnoputri plans to broaden her legal battle against the government with a formal complaint against an officially-sanctioned rival, one of her lawyers said Tuesday.

Ms. Megawati planned to lodge a formal complaint with the police Wednesday against her opponents in the fractured Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI), R.O. Tambunan said.

He said she would file the complaint against Surjadi, leader of a rebel PDI faction who replaced her with government backing as party leader in June.

A police assault on the PDI headquarters on July 27 to evict Ms. Megawati's supporters from the building was followed by the worst riots in Jakarta in more than 20 years.

At least four people died and a number of buildings and vehicles were destroyed or damaged.

"We will file the complaint tomorrow against Surjadi for illegal occupancy and assault in relation to the takeover of the PDI headquarters," Mr. Tambunan told Reuters by telephone.

He accused Mr. Surjadi, the deputy speaker of parliament, of masterminding the takeover.

Under Indonesian law, the police will consider the complaint and decide whether to hand it to the prosecutor's office for further action.

Ms. Megawati, daughter of Indonesia's late founding President Sukarno, is already suing the government and military for backing the faction that ousted her as party leader.

The case was due to open in the Jakarta Central District Court last Thursday but was postponed to Aug. 22.

Police gave Ms. Megawati a summons last week to report for questioning Monday about the recent rioting but she sent a team of lawyers instead, saying the summons was flawed.

Ms. Megawati told Reuters Monday night that she had received a second summons.

She said there were also problems with the second summons which she said related to an investigation into Budiman Sudjatmiko, head of the small left-wing People's Democratic Party which the government has accused of being behind the July 27 riots.

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Positive vs negative engagement

THE PROBLEM with the U.S. decision to punish non-U.S. companies investing in Iran's energy sector is that it borders on interference in the internal affairs of other countries. It also demonstrates that the Americans have very little regard for their European allies who have been advising them against such a move.

The Europeans argue, and rightly so, that punishing Iran will only strengthen the hand of radicals within the Iranian regime and win them more sympathy at home and abroad. This decision, which also applies to Libya, is certain now to create more tension in the region and more bitterness in Europe. The Europeans, especially the Germans and the French, have recently demonstrated that their policy of positive engagement towards Iran can pay. This was evident when Israel and the Iranian-backed Hizbollah party in Lebanon exchanged prisoners two weeks ago through the good offices of German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and the cooperation of Iran.

Iran could be sponsoring terrorism as the U.S. maintains and if it did it should be held accountable. Terrorism, though justified by some as the weak man's weapon against the strong, is a plague that should be eradicated. Almost all the members of the United Nations are agreed on this.

Therefore, if the U.S. had proof that Iran was sponsoring terrorism, it should take that proof to the U.N. Security Council and demand that the international community take the proper action in accordance with the U.N. Charter.

The U.S. measure has already generated a great deal of criticism coming mainly from U.S. allies in Europe and friends in Asia and elsewhere.

Meanwhile, the U.S. and its allies in the Gulf have put their forces in high alert, presumably to counter an imminent terrorist attack. This, coupled with the fresh U.S. sanctions against Iran, has led to speculation that the U.S. might be preparing for a punitive strike against Iran.

Washington needs to set the example for international relations by applying its own domestic criteria about guilt and innocence before tightening the noose around selected countries such as Cuba, Libya, Iraq and Iran.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A writer for Al Dustour has accused the United States of continually taking provocative measures against Iran and Iraq in order to cause tension in the Gulf region and to justify its continued presence in the Arabian Peninsula. Mohammad Kawash said that without any conclusive evidence to prove that Tehran was behind the recent bombing in Khobar, Washington continues to point an accusing finger at Tehran which it has often charges with supporting international terrorism, and has been trying to rally the Western world towards taking a hostile stand against Iran. Washington continues to demand that the world isolate Iran and impose sanctions on its people after it had succeeded in rallying the world community behind it in imposing a crippling embargo on Iraq whose people are facing starvation, he said. By trying to paint Iran and Iraq as horrible enemies of mankind bent on carrying out acts of terrorism and attacking their neighbours, the United States is aiming to perpetuate its presence in the gulf for the sake of ensuring its own interests and exploiting its oil wealth, charged the writer. He said that the United States is likely to pursue this policy in the Gulf until a conflict of interest emerges between Washington and its European allies in this sensitive region of the world.

A writer for Al Ra'i daily attacked the United States for delaying the implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 986 allowing Iraq to sell oil to buy food and medicine. Washington which has often accused Baghdad of disregarding the lives of the Iraqi people by refusing Resolution 986 that would alleviate part of the Iraqi people's suffering is itself blocking the implementation of that particular resolution, said Mahmoud Rimawi. By refusing to allow the council to carry out the resolution Washington is depriving Iraq of its right to medicine and food that would prevent the starvation of the Iraqi population, continued the writer. He said that it is regrettable that the European countries which oppose the American stand in this regard are doing nothing to end the suffering of the innocent population and are unable to confront Washington's actions at the Security Council. Indeed the embargo imposed on Iraq does not harm the Iraqi people alone but rather scores of other countries including Western powers which have interests in Iraq, added the writer. He said there can be no justification for further delay in rescuing the lives of 20 million people facing untold sufferings because of America's whims and selfish interests.

Washington Watch

Terrorism, Olympics and politics

By Dr. James Zogby

THE THREAT and reality of terrorism competed with the Olympics for America's attention this past week.

The unsolved bombing of the U.S. military base in Saudi Arabia, and the tragic and still suspicious downing of TWA Flight 800, were disturbing enough. But when a bomb exploded in the midst of the Olympic festival, a public frenzy followed. Even after the World Trade Centre bombing and that of the Oklahoma City federal building terrorism remained an abstract and remote possibility for most Americans, not a reality to be faced in everyday life.

The events of the past month have changed all that. How this new focus on the problem of terrorism will further transform daily life remains to be seen, but already commentators have noted a significant impact.

Even before the Olympic bombing, the security regime in Atlanta was unprecedented. For a society based on individual liberties, the acceptance of so much security was itself remarkable. The presence of thousands of uniformed and non-uniformed local, state, federal and special law enforcement officers — coupled with roving surveillance cameras, metal detectors and package searches — are practices that would never have been accepted by Americans two decades ago.

Security measures that are commonplace in other countries are now also viewed as necessary, and even normal, in America as well. A poll taken after the Olympic bombing showed that Americans accept these intrusions into their privacy and limits on their freedoms as important safeguards against threats to their security. So it is not surprising that in the aftermath of the Olympic bombing, President Clinton immediately convened a bipartisan panel of congressional leaders to discuss legislative proposals to give still greater powers to law enforcement agencies.

Many of the new powers sought had been rejected a few months ago when Congress passed an anti-terrorism bill. A coalition of liberals and libertarian conservatives defeated a number of the president's original proposals which they viewed as granting too much power to the government to invade privacy. The White House now feels that, given the public mood so close to the election, Congress may be forced to reconsider.

Included among the president's proposals are:

— expansion of federal wiretapping authority and loose standards for obtaining wiretaps;

— substantially increased funding for the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) counter-terrorism efforts;

— extension of statute of limitations for terrorism-related crimes;

— requiring chemical producers to mix tagging agents ("taggants") in their products so that the source of explosives used in a terrorist bomb can be more easily identified and traced; and

— allowing the use of hotel and telephone records in investigations of suspected terrorists.

The president will most certainly not get all of these proposals passed into law. Already the coalition that worked against earlier efforts to pass these provisions has begun to lobby, and members of the congressional leadership panel convened by the president have cautioned against moving too quickly as if in a panic.

But in an election year, given the public's concern with terrorism, Congress will at least make an effort to pass some of these proposals before November. Republican legislators, already reeling from accusations that some in their ranks have ties with the far-right militia movement, will certainly not want the White House to accuse them of being weak on the issue of fighting terrorism.

The president has received praise, even from his opponents, for how he has handled the tragedies of the past two weeks. He assumed a strong position of leadership in the face of several national tragedies and, in each instance, put a distinctive Clinton stamp on his response.

At first the president avoided becoming directly involved in the TWA crisis. Not wanting to politicise the situation, Clinton left the spotlight to New York's Republican governor and senator and the mayor of New York City, since that is where the crash had occurred. Only when the families of the victims complained about his absence and about misleading comments made by New York's governor did the president decide to intervene. His private meeting with the families of the victims was widely praised. Even New York Senator Alfonse D'Amato, a harsh critic of Clinton who had chaired the investigation into the Whitewater affair, said of Clinton: "He demonstrated care, concern and compassion. ...He should be

commended for coming here."

And while many disagreements still remain about Clinton's anti-terrorism proposals, his approach to this crisis and his convening of a bipartisan panel to discuss solutions to terrorism were well-received by supporters and opponents alike.

In a two-week period when it was assumed that Americans would be focused on the Olympic games, it was also assumed that neither Clinton nor Dole would find space for publicity, but events have proven the latter assumption to be wrong. During all this time the president's Republican challenger Bob Dole was literally invisible. One commentator noted that it was as if "Dole disappeared into a black hole."

A record-setting 40 per cent of Americans have in fact watched the Olympics, but terrorism became mixed in with the games and political leadership was required to restore public confidence. Apparently, the president succeeded. When asked in a recent poll who they felt would do a better job dealing with terrorism, Clinton easily won over Dole — a somewhat surprising result considering Dole's strong military background and the normal identification of Republicans with defence and security matters.

One final note: In all of this media and public frenzy over acts of terror, it is significant that there has been little serious mention of Arabs or Muslims. While it is true that there have been some isolated articles and comments in the electronic media, they have not added up and have been largely dismissed in serious public discourse.

From President Clinton on down, there were strong and repeated warnings to Americans not to rush to judgement. The media was reminded of the Oklahoma City debacle. And apparently the warnings had an impact. Even when the Munich tragedy of 1972 was mentioned at the opening of the Olympics (and it was logical that it would be mentioned for many reasons), it was listed as a historic incident — not as an accusation.

We may not yet be free from the immediate identification of Arabs and Muslims with terrorist acts; but if the past few weeks are any indication, the danger may be receding.

Could Indonesia turn to democracy?

By Gwynne Dyer

RIOTERS YELLING

"democracy" silhouetted

against burning buildings.

Two dead and 26 injured. A

hundred-bumped-out cars

and buses, all around the city

centre, and all buildings —

mostly government and

army offices and banks —

set on fire. Karachi or

Caracas, maybe, or even

Los Angeles. But surely not

Jakarta? That sort of thing

never happens in Jakarta.

Until now. The riots in the

sprawling Indonesian capital

in the early morning of

July 27, were a classic

example of what happens

when an ageing authoritarian

regime starts to lose its

touch. A brutal and needless

action by the regime

provoked the riots, and as a

result the spell that held 200

million Indonesians quiet

for the past thirty years has

been broken. Perhaps irre-

versibly.

Indonesia is big, power-

ful, important — and for

several decades, it has been

almost invisible on the

world scene. It is the

world's fourth largest coun-

try: much bigger than

Russia and catching up fast

on the United States. But

outside its own region, it

hardly ever got mentioned

by the media.

Why not? Because

President Suharto, a former

general who came to power

after the chaos and genocidal

violence of the mid-60s, was

when over half a million

Indonesians were massac-

red, ruled the place with a

sure hand, and the only

news Indonesia generated

was economic. Just recent-

ly, however, he has been

losing his touch.

"They are making her into

a real opposition leader,"

observed Dewi Fortuna

Anwar, a local political sci-

entist, only weeks before

government troops raided

Megawati Sukarnoputri's

political headquarters and

triggered last Saturday's all-

night riot. "People are sym-

pathetic because of the way

she has been treated. She

has become a rallying point

for all the people with a

grievance."

President Suharto has

ruled Indonesia for so long

that over half the population

has never known another

ruler. That is enough time

for people to accumulate a

lot of grievances — and

though Suharto has deliv-

ered steady 7 per cent annu-

al growth in GNP, making

his nation the slowest but by

far the biggest of the Asian

economic "tigers", there is

quite a lot wrong in

Indonesia.

"If you throw a stone, it

will fall on the property of

the family," Indonesians

say, and it is almost literally

true: Half the Indonesian

economy is controlled by

just forty to fifty big com-

panies, and a significant

portion of them are run or

partly owned by four of

Suharto's children. Ex-gen-

erals and other Suharto

cronies account for most of

the rest: you have to do a

lot of favours to remain in

power for 30 years.

The brazen corruption at

the centre goes unchal-

lenged because of tight con-

trols that allow only tame

media, tame labour unions,

and tame "opposition par-

ties" to survive. Indonesia

has most of the parapherna-

lia of democracy, but it is a

one-man dictatorship. In-

donesians put up with it

because there was econom-

ic growth, and because they

were scared. Until now.

An emerging middle

class, a literate younger

generation, growing trade

unions, more contact with

the outside world: all the

usual changes that drive a

shift to democracy were

happening in Indonesia

already. But protest needs a

focus, and it was Suharto

who unintentionally provid-

ed one.

The facade of democracy

in Indonesia includes two

small opposition parties, the

Muslim-oriented United

Development Party and the

secular Indonesian

Democratic Party (PDI).

Until recently, they never

dared challenge the primacy

of the regime's own party,

Golkar, which represents

the interests of Indonesia's

interlocking bureaucratic,

military and business elites.

But then, in 1993, Megawati

Sukarnoputri won the leadership of the

PDI.

She is not a charismatic

speaker, but she has a far

more important asset: she is

the daughter of Indonesia's

independence hero, the

founding father who is the

only man other than Suharto

ever to have ruled the coun-

try.

The late president

Sukarno was actually a dis-

aster who gutted the econ-

omy, pursued a futile military

confrontation with

Malaysia, and finally

unleashed bloody anarchy

in the mid-60s in an attempt

to save his power. But in the

popular memory, he has the

inestimable virtue of not

being Suharto. So does his

daughter.

Suharto actually had noth-

ing to fear from Sukarnoputri even if she

opposed him for president:

the constitution he crafted

guaranteed it. Even if her

Indonesian Democratic

Party had won a stunning

upset victory in the mid-

1997 parliamentary elec-

tions, the "People's

Consultative Assembly"

which must choose a new

president in 1998 includes

only 400 elected parliamen-

tarians, versus 600 soldiers

and civilians appointed by

the regime.

But Suharto could not

leave it alone. Last June a

faction of the PDI acting at

the army's behest ousted

Sukarnoputri and installed a

tame leader in her place.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Kuwaiti MPs complain over jobs

KUWAIT (AFP) — Opposition members of parliament (MPs) criticised the government on Tuesday for not doing enough to stop the illegal trade in visas which allows foreigners to enter the country and take jobs away from Kuwaitis. "We are getting to the stage where qualified Kuwaitis cannot find a job," liberal MP Ali Ahmad Al Baghli said in parliament, adding that unemployed Kuwaitis are a "time bomb" for society. The government must do more to stop the illegal visa trade to prevent Kuwaitis from feeling they are "strangers in our country," Mr. Baghli said, adding that Kuwaiti citizens now accounted for only 36 per cent of the country's population of almost two million. Kuwaiti laws require expatriates entering the country to have a local sponsor apply for a visa on their behalf and provide them with work. MPs said some Kuwaitis illegally sponsor expatriates for as much as 700 dinars (\$2,300), which allows them to enter the country and seek work even if the sponsor has no job for them. The issue was raised as MPs debated a visa-abuse report prepared by a special committee of members of parliament, which listed cases, government action so far and recommendations for the future. Deputies approved the report's findings and sent it to the government with the non-binding recommendations including a request for the government to step up its investigations and prepare a regular six-monthly assessment of its achievements, to be debated in parliament.

Doctor sacked for wearing headscarf

COPENHAGEN (AFP) — A Muslim woman was sacked from the hospital where she worked as a doctor for insisting on wearing a headscarf in keeping with Islamic tradition, a Danish anti-racist group said Tuesday. It has started legal proceedings claiming racial discrimination against the head of the Nykoebing-Falster hospital, 150 kilometres south of Copenhagen. The hospital, for its part, said the decision had been taken for the sake of hygiene because of the danger of bacteria being transported in the scarf from one room in the hospital to another.

Israel drops probe into police killing

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — The justice ministry has dropped an investigation against border policemen who shot and killed a Palestinian during an undercover stakeout, a human rights group said Tuesday. Daoud Shuwaiki was killed on June 6 when he and his brother approached an unmarked van outside their home in East Jerusalem. Police said undercover troops inside the van shot at them after they mistakenly thought Daoud had pulled out a gun. Daoud died of bullet wounds to his head and chest and his brother was wounded. Security sources told the AP that the troops were lying in ambush for Palestinian fugitives. The human rights group Betselem on Tuesday issued a statement asking the case be reopened after receiving a letter from the justice ministry that the case was "closed due to absence of fault." Betselem, which monitors human rights violations in the West Bank and Gaza, said that in 13 files monitored of killings by undercover border police units, 12 were closed without charges.

Izetbegovic in Turkey on private visit

ANKARA (AFP) — Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic arrived in Istanbul late Monday for a private visit, the Anatolian news agency reported. Mr. Izetbegovic will meet with relatives who live in Turkey, the agency said without providing details.

Rabin assassin says court 'mistaken'

TEL AVIV (AP) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's convicted assassin is asking the supreme court to reconsider his appeal, a court official said Tuesday. The court rejected Yigal Amir's appeal on Sunday, upholding his life sentence for the Nov. 4 murder of Mr. Rabin at a Tel Aviv peace rally. In the appeal, Amir's lawyers said the court was mistaken in rejecting the appeal, arguing he should have been convicted of manslaughter, not murder. The 26-year-old religious law student argued at his trial that he meant to cripple the prime minister, not to kill him. The appeal also claimed there was a second assassin who fired at Mr. Rabin at the same time as Amir. It is rare for the supreme court to agree to a second hearing of an appeal in a criminal case. Last year 15 such requests were submitted but only two were granted, said the court official, Shulamit Netanel.

Turkey denies visa to Zhirinovsky

MOSCOW (AP) — Turkey refused to issue a visa to ultranationalist Vladimir Zhirinovsky, who has called the country one of Russia's "main foes," a news report said Monday. Mr. Zhirinovsky planned to vacation at a Turkish resort on the Mediterranean Sea, but was not allowed to board a plane in Moscow on Thursday because he did not have a visa, the Interfax news agency said. The Russian Foreign Ministry told Turkish diplomats that it was bewildered by the refusal, a ministry spokesman told Interfax. The Turkish embassy declined to comment to Interfax. Mr. Zhirinovsky, who finished fifth in Russia's presidential election, also has advocated annexing Turkey, as well as Poland, Finland and Alaska, into a revived Russian empire. Mr. Zhirinovsky consistently has been denied a visa to Germany, and past trips abroad have ended in scandal. He was expelled from Bulgaria for insulting the Bulgarian president, and asked to leave Slovenia for causing commotion at a drinking party.

Quake damages buildings in Greece

ATHENS (AFP) — A strong quake registering 5.6 on the Richter scale shook northwest Greece overnight, causing damage to buildings but no injuries, seismologists and police said Tuesday. The quake near the border with Albania was classified as "very strong" by a seismological institute in Athens. It occurred at 1:46 a.m. (2246 GMT Monday). Police in the town of Konitsa said it caused damage to buildings there but no injuries. Seismologists predicting strong aftershocks urged residents not to return home for the next two nights. The quake comes little over a week after Konitsa and the surrounding region were hit by a temblor on July 26 measuring 5.2 on the Richter scale which also caused structural damage.

Iraq enters 7th year under embargo with no end in sight

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraqis on Tuesday began a seventh year under international sanctions with their hopes dwindling of a U.N. oil-for-food deal to ease the embargo.

Underlining their pessimism, the U.S. dollar was valued at 1,150 dinars here Monday, while last week it traded for 1,027 dinars, money changers said.

The price of necessities continued to climb because of delays in the application of the oil-for-food agreement concluded in May with the United Nations.

"When the news is bad, the prices go up and our morale falls," taxi driver Abed Jamil said. "We work hard but our income is tiny. How can we live?" he asked.

Um Ammar, a mother who had just been shopping at the main market of Shorjah, said: "My husband is a civil servant. The prices go up every day and our purchasing power declines before our eyes."

"We hope that the oil-for-food agreement will finally go into effect so we can live a normal life."

The average monthly salary of a civil servant is about 3,000 dinars. A kilo of tea sold for 2,100 dinars Monday, compared with 1,500 dinars barely a week ago, and a kilo of sugar now costs 650 dinars compared to 550 dinars last week.

Vegetable oil has gone up in price from 600 to 900 dinars over the same period. "I could not buy a quarter of what I needed today. Prices have more than doubled in the past 10 days," mother Zaynab Abdul Rahim said.

The trade, financial and

military embargo of Iraq was imposed by the U.N. Security Council on Aug. 6, 1990, four days after Iraq invaded Kuwait. But food prices went down May 20 when the oil-for-food accord was signed.

The deal allows Baghdad to sell \$2 billion worth of Iraqi oil every six months with which it may buy food, medicine and civilian supplies under the strict supervision of the United Nations.

The Iraqis had been waiting for the markets to fill up with merchandise at

reduced prices, but now feel disappointed.

The United States made it clear last week that it will not give the green light for the accord to go into effect until it is certain that U.N. supervision will be "adequate" to prevent the funds going into Iraqi state coffers.

The sanctions commission's decision to implement the agreement must receive unanimous support from the 15 U.N. Security Council members. Except for the United States, the other 14 members are

ready to agree to the measure.

"Washington is using economic sanctions against Iraq as a tool to starve and exterminate our people," Saad Qassem Hammudi, chairman of the Iraqi parliament's foreign relations committee, charged on Tuesday.

Baghdad has called on Security Council members to press Washington on the matter, saying that "the U.S. blockade means a lengthening of the suffering of the Iraqi people caused by the embargo."

Iranian leaders play down tension with U.S.

TEHRAN (R) — Iran's clergy-dominated leadership and state-run media are playing down heightened tension with the United States in order to calm fears of armed conflict, analysts said on Tuesday.

Both spiritual leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani have spoken forcefully against what is seen here as a new wave of American propaganda against the Islamic republic.

But neither has referred specifically to the possibility of a military confrontation.

Newspapers on Monday

urged the armed forces be put on full alert but there were no rumours of unusual troop movements.

Only once in recent days have state-run radio and television interrupted their regular programmes, and that was to ask people to pray when Iran's Olympics gold medalist wrestled in Atlanta.

As a result, very few in this nation of 60 million people were aware of any threats.

Tension rose over U.S. comments that Iran might be behind the bomb that killed 19 U.S. airmen in Saudi Arabia in June and that Washington would take

strong action against any country involved.

U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry on Friday called Iran the leading candidate for international terrorism against the United States but on Saturday denied this signalled imminent military action against Iran.

Iran complained to the United Nations about the threats.

The Foreign Ministry was quick to respond to events as they unfolded but its audience was mainly outside the country.

"Let the worries of the outside world not affect the children at home," one ana-

lyst remarked.

"Even if Iranian officials

feared the worst they managed to play it cool."

U.S. President Bill Clinton on Monday characterised Iran and Libya as "two of the most dangerous supporters of terrorism in the world," a charge repeatedly denied by Tehran.

He spoke after signing into law a bill to punish foreign firms that invest \$40 million or more a year in oil or gas projects in the two countries.

European states protested vehemently at the U.S. law's extra-territorial reach and France threatened retaliation.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry said the law was doomed to failure and would lead to America's isolation.

Radio and television relegated news of the signing to the last items on their Monday evening news.

Tehran Times on Tuesday called the law "intrinsically silly" and said it was another desperate attempt by Washington to beef up its image abroad as a loser in its fight against terrorism.

It said the United States should be expelled from the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and added: "Resilient as he may be...

deep inside Clinton actually suffers from insecurity in the face of a stalled Middle East peace process and the inability to deal with countries suspected of terrorism."

Iran News said history would record the new law as one of the most illogical and irresponsible actions taken by a U.S. president.

"Iran now expects more and speedy constructive dialogue with Europe to promote further healthy politico-economic ties with all the members of the European Union."

Egypt opposes tougher U.N. sanctions on Sudan

CAIRO (R) — Egypt reiterated on Tuesday its strong refusal to impose tougher sanctions against Sudan, which is already facing a U.N. diplomatic and travel ban but warned Khartoum it could not keep up this stance for long.

"Egypt has refused from the very beginning the toughening of sanctions against Sudan," said Adel Al Safty, first secretary at the Egyptian Foreign Ministry.

"Egypt alone opposed the general and growing trend in the Security Council (to increase sanctions) but it will not be able to keep this stand forever... We urge Sudan to fulfill the Security Council's resolutions so sanctions are not increased," he added.

On Monday, Security Council sources said Egypt was spearheading a move to impose an air embargo against Sudan, adding to the diplomatic and travel ban slapped by the council earlier this year for Khartoum's failure to extradite three men accused of trying to kill Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

Sudan denies the men are within its borders. The council sources said Egypt was still opposed to economic sanctions against Sudan for the adverse effect they would have on the country's people and that it had also rejected military sanctions because they would hamper the Khartoum government's 13-year-old battle against rebels in the south.

"Egypt is concerned with the welfare of the Sudanese people and wants to keep up good neighbourly relations. We hope for a reciprocal feeling from Sudan," Mr. Safty said.

"We do not want the people of a country to be punished for the activities of illegal organisations or even if their governments sometimes support these organisations," he added.

Arafat assails Israeli premier

Mr. Netanyahu did not take office until June 18. Israel's Haaretz newspaper said Friday's decision would clear the way for the sale of 2,509 apartments in the West Bank, bringing in 10,000 new settlers.

Hagai Segal, a settler activist and columnist for the Maariv newspaper, said it was "almost certain that by the next election many more Jews will live" in the West Bank and Gaza, "maybe a quarter million, maybe 300,000. If and when the left returns to power in the 2000 elections it will no longer be able to dry them out... The settlements have been cleansed of any suspicion that they are temporary."

Mr. Arafat said Tuesday the agreement he had reached with the late Israeli prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, had made clear there would be no settlement expansion.

"Not a single house was allowed to be built in the settlements, no financial assistance was to be allowed from the government that would encourage settlements," he said.

Tuesday's legislative council session was to have focussed on the recent torture and death of a Palestinian detainee by Palestinian police and violent protests against the security forces last week in the West Bank,

U.S. comes under heavy fire for Iran, Libya sanctions

(Continued from page 1)

Netherlands also vented anger at the U.S. move, while Australia joined a groundswell of condemnation from outside Europe.

However, there was no official reaction Tuesday from China, India or Indonesia.

Pakistan officially described the U.S. sanctions move as "unfortunate," saying that its relations with Tehran would remain unaffected.

(Continued from page 1)

that he had indirectly accused Levy aides of filming a videotape of him with his lover. A police investigation found no videotape existed.

Officials said the Netanyahu-Levy rivalry has also affected attempts to resume negotiations with the Palestinians.

Mr. Levy met with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat last month and promised to set up a steering committee

within a few days to conduct negotiations. Mr. Levy wanted to head the panel but Mr. Netanyahu has yet to approve the move and the situation remains stalemated.

Mr. Levy and Mr. Netanyahu have a long history of bitter political rivalry and analysts say a new flare-up between the two could undermine the governing right-wing coalition.

Mr. Levy broke away from Mr. Netanyahu's

individually penalising companies is the best way to put pressure on these countries," Norwegian foreign ministry spokesman Ingvald Havnem said.

French oil group Total said that neither its investments in Iran nor its search for partners for the giant Sirri fields in the Gulf would be affected by the new law.

Robert Kyle, international economic advisor to President Clinton confirmed on Monday that existing com-

mitments by foreign companies in Iran, including Total, would not come under the remit of the new law as it could only target contracts signed since Monday.

Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy and International Commerce Minister Art Eggleton said Canada would meet with the EU and other allies to "determine" how best to address the extraterritorial impact of the act.

Netanyahu-Levy feud bursts into open

(Continued from page 1)

right-wing Likud Party last year to set up a centrist political movement, Geshet, and planned to run against Mr. Netanyahu and Labour leader Shimon Peres in Israel's first direct election for prime minister.

He rallied to Mr. Netanyahu's side for the May elections only in exchange for a promise that he would be named foreign minister if the right won the polls, a post he already held under the last Likud government in the early

1990s.

Mr. Levy's leverage over Mr. Netanyahu was twice illustrated following the elections when he threatened to resign if Mr. Sharon was not brought into the government.

His tactic worked and Mr. Netanyahu was forced to give in, naming Mr. Sharon to head a powerful and specially created national infrastructure ministry.

Israeli soldier killed

(Continued from page 1)

Army (SLA) militia near the village of Barasheet.

A statement by the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hizbollah's military wing, however, said the guerrillas fired rocket-propelled grenades and machine-guns, scoring "direct hits that set fire to the position."

In retaliation, Israeli artillery fired at least 20 rockets at locations around two villages facing the position, inflicting no casualties, said security sources.

Ten Israeli soldiers have now been killed and 27 wounded since Israel ended on April 26 its 17-day offensive against Hizbollah in Lebanon that left more than 200 dead, nearly all civilians.

The SLA on Tuesday accused Hizbollah of violating an April ceasefire accord by kidnapping one of its fighters.

"It's a violation of the April agreement under which the terrorists should not use civilian areas to launch their operations. They came from a village and returned there after their crime," the militia's radio station said.

Syria says it rejects Israeli offer

(Continued from page 1)

into occupied Syrian territory."

Mr. Netanyahu has said that a settlement in Lebanon — the last active Arab-Israeli battlefield — is vital to assure Israel's security before it proceeds in peace talks.

But Syria sees the proposal for an Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon as an attempt to divide Arab ranks and jettison the principle of land-for-peace.

President Hosni Mubarak will hold talks Wednesday with Syrian President Hafez Assad as

part of heightened Arab coordination on the Middle East peace process.

The meeting in the Egyptian port city of Alexandria is the latest in a series that followed the election last May of Mr. Netanyahu as Israeli prime minister.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa told reporters Tuesday that Mr. Mubarak and Mr. Assad "will give special attention to the Syrian and Lebanese tracks in light of the possibility of resuming talks... based on trial balloons linked to movement on the Lebanese track."

It was a reference to the

"Lebanon first" plan that Mr. Netanyahu has put forward.

Mr. Mubarak last week cautioned Israel against trying to make peace with Lebanon without bringing Syria along, saying such an approach won't work.

Wednesday's talks will also focus on the Israeli government's decision to restart construction of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Mr. Musa said.

Mr. Assad was last in Egypt for an Arab summit on June 22-23. Syria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia called the meeting.

Netanyahu drops Rabin's Golan promise to U.S.

(Continued from page 12)

before he met King Hussein.

According to a senior official who briefed reporters after the talks, at least two new ideas were put forward which won Jordan's interest and will be implemented. First, the two countries will jointly open trans-shipment and logistic facilities in the Aqaba-Eilat area, thereby servicing countries all over the world. The official cited

Singapore as a model for such a project, as conceived by the Israeli head of the Jordan Rift Valley project, Dr. Yossi Vardi.

Another idea discussed yesterday was to establish a joint natural gas terminal in the Aqaba-Eilat area. Israel had held discussions with Qatar about shipping liquefied gas.

Netanyahu said he personally supports an Aqaba-Eilat airport, which he noted was still in the feasibility study phase. Overall,

he was enthusiastic about prospects of the Aqaba-Eilat area, saying it had "unimaginable magnitude."

In a bid to ease trade ties with Jordan, the senior official said Israel would place more manpower at border crossings, thereby speeding up the security checks which constrain goods moving between the two countries. He also said customs duties on Jordanian textile goods would be lowered.

High oil prices slash Arab account deficit

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab oil producers slashed their current account deficit by more than a quarter in 1995 as they pressed ahead with reforms and earned more from oil exports, an official report showed Tuesday.

The combined deficit in the current account in the Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) dropped to \$9.38 billion in 1995 from \$13.72 billion in 1994, the 10-nation group said in a study.

The 1995 gap is nearly one fifth of the record deficit of \$46.4 billion in 1991, when more than \$60 billion were syphoned out of the government coffers in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to finance the costly Gulf war.

"The decline in the deficit was due to the improvement in oil revenues and economic reform programmes aimed at diversifying the productive base and liberalising trade in member states," the Kuwaiti-based organisation said.

The report did not include Iraq, which has been under sanctions imposed by the U.N. Security Council when President Saddam Hussein's troops invaded

neighbouring Kuwait on Aug. 2, 1990.

The embargo has paralysed the Iraqi economy, which official Arab reports said had dived by around 78.5 per cent since the enforcement of the ban. This slashed the per capita income to less than a quarter.

OPEC said the current account, a key indicator in performance, was expected to further improve in 1996 due to high oil prices and reforms.

Several member states have carried out reforms to tackle economic problems, including deficits in the balances of payments and budgets, unemployment, inflation, slow growth rates, and debts.

In the Gulf, the reforms are intended to lessen reliance on volatile oil earnings and expand the private sector.

The OPEC study showed Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil producer and exporter, trimmed its current account deficit to around \$10.1 billion in 1995 from \$12.8 billion in 1994.

This was because of an increase in oil and petrochemical exports and lower imports and remittances. It contrasts sharply with a

record shortfall of \$27.5 billion in 1991.

Qatar also cut the shortfall to \$1.27 billion from \$1.39 billion and Libya to \$480 million from \$621 million.

It fell to around \$1.12 billion from \$1.83 billion in Algeria, to \$460 million from \$782 million in Bahrain and to \$800 million from \$1.6 billion in Egypt.

In Syria the gap rose to \$1.14 billion from \$980 million, while the current account recorded a surplus of \$4.19 billion and \$1.4 billion in Kuwait and the Arab Emirates respectively.

Oil sales provide the bulk of the income of OPEC members, which control more than 60 per cent of the global crude reserves and produce nearly a quarter of the world's total oil supplies.

The improvement in oil prices to \$16.8 from \$15.53 boosted their crude export income to \$92.6 billion in 1995, the highest level since the mid-1980s, according to official Arab figures.

Initial estimates also showed their gross domestic product exceeded \$450 billion in 1995 compared with \$433 billion in 1994.

Egypt, IMF agree draft economic reform plan

CAIRO (R) — Egypt and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have agreed a draft plan for economic reform which may unlock a long-delayed \$4 billion tranche of Western debt forgiveness, the IMF representative in Egypt said Monday.

Arvind Subramanian said the reforms, aiming to transform Egypt's lumbering command economy into a dynamic market-driven system, would boost the private sector, increase efficiency and raise exports to put Egypt "on a higher growth trajectory".

"It's a positive initial step," he said of the agreement, reached between Egypt and a visiting IMF mission last month. He said it must still be agreed by IMF management in Washington before being submitted to the fund's executives for approval.

Western creditor nations from the Paris Club, who agreed on a \$10 billion debt forgiveness package for Egypt five years ago, made the final \$4 billion tranche of the waiver dependent on IMF approval of Egypt's economic reforms.

But Cairo and the fund have been wrangling for more than two years over plans to overhaul the bureaucratic and protectionist policies of Egypt's public sector dominated economy.

Negotiations stalled in July 1994 when the government dug its heels in against IMF proposals to devalue the pound. Egypt says devaluation is no longer on the reform agenda.

"This is a new programme," Mr. Subramanian told Reuters. "The key objective...is to raise substantially Egypt's rate of economic growth with a view to improving the stan-

dard of living and making a dent in unemployment."

The government says unemployment stands at 9.4 per cent but unofficial estimates put the level much higher.

Public Enterprise Minister Atef Obeid said the draft accord set out a package of reforms aiming to nearly double economic growth to eight per cent annually and create 500,000 jobs a year.

He told the government newspaper Al-Ahram the agreement also aimed to increase Egypt's foreign reserves to \$22 billion from current \$18.5 billion.

"This is a very positive step, both in terms of firming up our reform programme, and in showing the world we have a coherent reform programme to which we are committed," Minister of State for Economic Affairs Youssef Boutros-Ghali told Reuters.

Mr. Subramanian said the deal would build on macroeconomic stability achieved since Egypt set out on the road to reform in 1991, including low inflation and a controlled budget deficit. It also envisaged "a serious structural reform effort" including privatisation, trade liberalisation, deregulation, greater private sector involvement in the financial system and modernisation of the fiscal system, he said.

"It aims to raise exports, boost investments and efficiency to put Egypt on a higher growth trajectory," Mr. Subramanian said.

The government of Prime Minister Kamal Ganzouri, appointed in January this year, has accelerated Egypt's wide-ranging privatisation programme and set ambitious targets to raise exports, which fell back slightly last year.

U.S. pushing for trade benefits to Palestinians

RAMALLAH, West Bank (R) — A senior U.S. trade official said Monday he was optimistic that Congress would pass a bill by October granting Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip free access to U.S. markets.

Stuart Eizenstat, under-secretary for international trade at the U.S. Commerce Department, told reporters after he met Palestinian President Yasser Arafat in the West Bank town of Ramallah that Washington was trying to ease the economic burden resulting from an Israeli closure on the two areas.

"We have some reason for optimism that the Congress will pass a provision which will allow all Palestinian goods to come in to the United States on a completely duty free basis with no quotas, no limitations of any kind," Mr. Eizenstat said. "The president, Secretary of State (Warren Christopher), Secretary of Commerce (Mickey) Kantor, are all pushing to have this legislation enacted and on the president's desk when the Congress goes home in October," he said.

The United States and the Palestinians have been working on a free trade agreement since last year. Palestinians are covered under the General System

of Preferences that allows the export of some products according to a quota.

Mr. Eizenstat said Mr. Arafat complained of economic hardships as a result of an Israeli closure imposed after Islamic militant suicide bombings in February and March that killed 59 people.

The closure, which was eased recently, barred thousands of Palestinian labourers from jobs in Israel and made it difficult to import raw materials and export products abroad.

Mr. Eizenstat said the United States would give Israel \$100 million to purchase sophisticated security equipment to facilitate security checks while allowing Palestinian goods to pass through the border.

He also said that the United States and Israel were working to set up an industrial park at the Karnai crossing between the Gaza Strip and Israel to draw foreign companies to set up investments there. He gave no details.

Mr. Eizenstat said many U.S. companies were interested in setting up businesses in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and named one company that was planning to set up a water bottling plant in the West Bank town of Jericho.

Dole seeks to boost election campaign with tax-cut plan

CHICAGO (R) — Republican presidential contender Bob Dole promised Monday to slash taxes and balance the federal budget as well as an economic renewal plan designed to fire up his lagging campaign against President Bill Clinton.

"I am announcing my economic programme for America's renewal — a programme that will return economic growth, rising living standards and prosperity for all Americans to the centre of our policy,"

Mr. Dole said in a speech to a business group that quickly drew jeers from the White House.

The heart of his long-awaited plan — the key to his strategy for sparking public interest in his candidacy — is a promise of \$548 billion in tax cuts over six years including a 15 per cent reduction in income tax rates over three years.

He also promised to cut in half the current maximum 28 per cent capital gains tax, reducing it to a 14 per cent levy on profits from

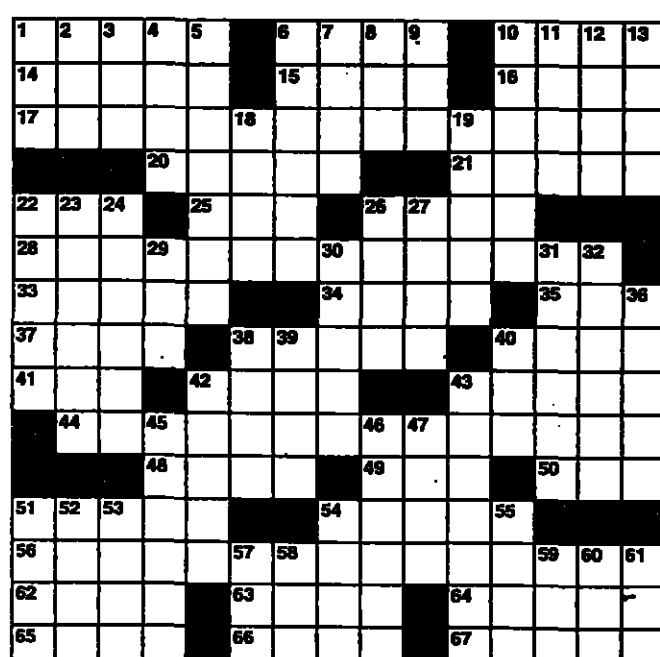
sales of stocks or other assets.

Overall, Mr. Dole said of the total package of cuts: "I intend to lower the federal income tax bill of a family of four making \$35,000 a year by 56 per cent."

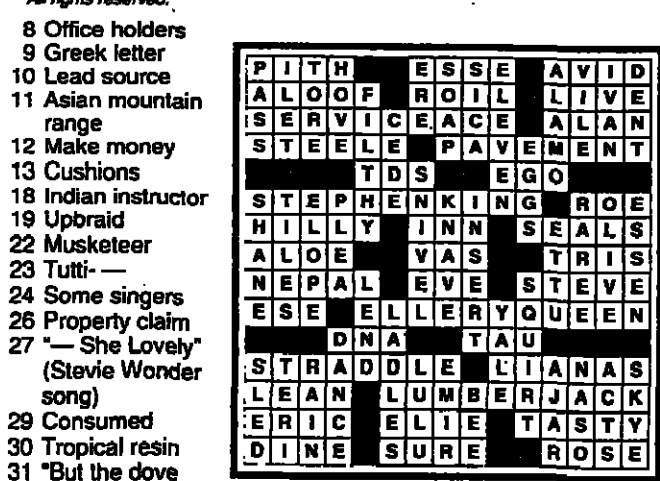
Mr. Dole, who will officially become the Republican nominee at next week's party convention in San Diego, California, trails Democrat Clinton by up to 20 points in opinion polls exactly three months before the Nov. 5 election.

THE Daily Crossword by Kenneth Witte

- ACROSS
- 1 Canines
 - 6 — on one's shoulder
 - 10 Oscar role for Tom Hanks
 - 14 Kate's friend, on TV
 - 15 Attila's followers
 - 16 Met offering
 - 17 Bob Denver sitcom
 - 20 Support
 - 21 Highland Scots, e.g.
 - 22 Close to the stern
 - 25 Sooner than
 - 26 Celebrity
 - 28 Stevenson classic
 - 33 Seeks game
 - 34 Give for a bit
 - 35 Br. lex.
 - 37 Indian
 - 38 Council of —
 - 40 Jocular Johnson
 - 41 Ship: abbr.
 - 42 Appear in threatening form
 - 43 Antigone's uncle
 - 44 Best seller by Waugh
 - 48 Garfield's pal
 - 49 One-time Middle East org.
 - 50 Attempt
 - 51 Swifly
 - 54 Ankle-length skirts
 - 56 Donne quote
 - 62 Plane, e.g.
 - 63 Bath powder
 - 64 English ruling family
 - 65 Different
 - 66 Flounder kin
 - 67 Irish poet



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- DOWN
- 1 Children's game
 - 2 Actor Wallach
 - 3 House extension
 - 4 Joust
 - 5 Legatee
 - 6 Whisky follower
 - 7 Barbarous persons
 - 8 Office holders
 - 9 Greek letter
 - 10 Lead source
 - 11 Asian mountain range
 - 12 Make money
 - 13 Cushions
 - 18 Indian instructor
 - 19 Upbraid
 - 22 Musketeer
 - 23 Tutti —
 - 24 Some singers
 - 26 Property claim
 - 27 "She Lovely" (Stevie Wonder song)
 - 29 Consumed
 - 30 Tropical resin
 - 31 "But the dove found —" (Bible)
 - 32 Construction bypass
 - 36 Tiger great
 - 37 McLain
 - 38 Singer Tennille
 - 39 Traveled
 - 40 Have being
 - 42 Burdened
 - 43 New —
 - 45 Story setting
 - 46 Shade
 - 47 Judd Hirsch vehicle
 - 51 Poker stake
 - 52 Word before shark or table
 - 53 Hebrew prophet
 - 54 Shopping complex
 - 55 Swing around
 - 57 "— Greek to me"
 - 58 — Paulo (Brazil)
 - 59 OK town
 - 60 Negative
 - 61 MD's

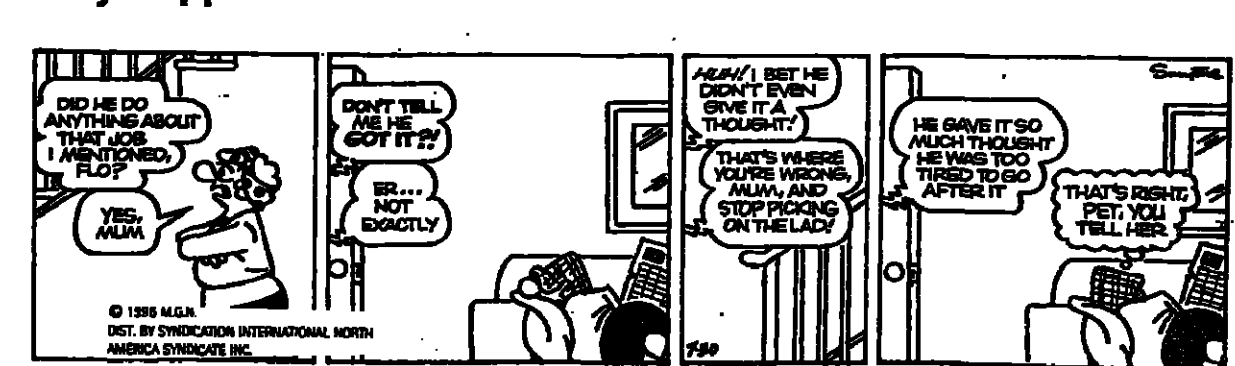
THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



Peanuts



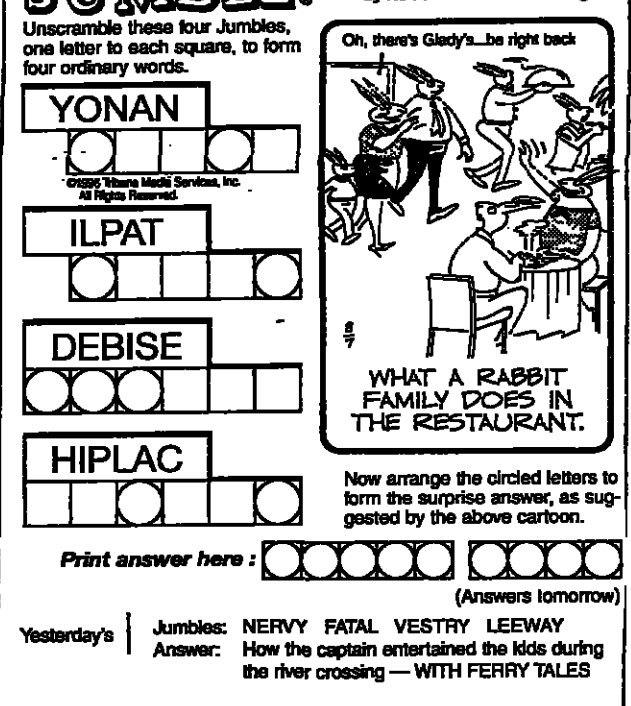
Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME



HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Put in motion those ideas today which you have long been toying with and you can make it a great success. Accept some invitation for amusement later this evening from a close friend and you can have a fun time.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 21) Please your love ones immensely today and you will receive a great deal of appreciation. Invite guests in only during the daytime hours and later tonight complete those career activities which have been put aside.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Be active in the outside world today and make real progress in your career activities. Worldly affairs could be disappointing later this evening, however, you can take them in stride if you are patient in the days ahead.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Plan how to add to your present abundance today and you will be successful in the eyes of your loved ones. Be sure to take any health treatments you need to feel and look your own self and keep a positive attitude.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You have excellent ideas today for gaining your finest wishes and you will be quite prosperous as a result of your actions. Forget amusement tonight which could be disappointing and stay home with your loved ones.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Study how best to go after your secret interests today and make the best of this wonderful situation. This can be a good evening tonight to entertain in your home with close friends and loved ones who will have a great time.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Contact the most generous close friend you have and discuss today a plan this person will comprehend easily. Later this evening will be good for you to consult with some bigwig on some ideas for the project which you are given.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Attend those civic affairs today which can give you added prestige especially in the community where you dwell. Later this evening you can go out on the town with your mate to some romantic location and enjoy yourselves.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Look into new outlets today and make new contacts who can be quite helpful for your career activities. Be very careful later this evening with your driving while on the highway and you will avoid getting into an accident.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to Jan. 20) Contact a clever expert today in business and obtain more modern advice towards your career activities and you can make yourself quite successful. Avoid one later this evening who has a habit of complaining or you could see yourself in great difficulty.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Get in touch with a fellow associate who is becoming prominent and form an alliance which could be quite beneficial. Don't go anywhere depressing tonight or you could find yourself in a lousy mood towards your loved ones.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) If you make your surroundings more cheerful and colourful today you can enjoy more comfort and relaxation there with close friends and your loved ones. Later tonight you can spend this time with your mate and enjoy yourselves.

Birthstone of August: Peridot — Golden Quartz

Busine

IDB approves 37 loans for a total of JD10.8m

AMMAN (R) — The IDB board of directors has approved 37 loans worth a total of JD10.8 million to finance various projects in various parts of the kingdom.

The board also approved the construction of a new hotel and restaurant complex in Amman.

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Business & Finance

IDB approves 37 loans for a total of JD10.8m

AMMAN (Petra) — The Industrial Development Bank's (IDB) board of directors Monday agreed to extend 37 loans worth JD 10.8 million to finance industrial and tourist projects in various parts of the Kingdom.

The tourist projects include the construction of hotels and suites and establishing transport companies and restaurants.

The industrial projects include the establishment of yeast and starch factories in addition to wooden, carton and cardboard, fodder, marble, burners and canned food industries.

Since the beginning of this year the bank has granted JD 21.7 million in loans to finance industrial and tourist projects.

Lebanon cargo carrier suspends all activities

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon's troubled cargo carrier Trans Mediterranean Airlines (TMA) suspended all activities indefinitely as of Monday, TMA said in a statement.

"The management of Trans Mediterranean Airlines (TMA) suspends as of 5/8/1996 all its land and air activities," the statement, addressed to the company's 460 employees, said.

In response to the statement, the union of TMA's employees called an extraordinary general assembly "to take the appropriate decision in response to the management decision."

Last year, TMA's workers staged a 100-day strike to press for higher pay. Last April the airline announced it was suspending the contracts of 195 workers for one year because of its deteriorating financial condition, also complain they have not been paid since May.

TMA is owned by the Lebanese Company for Air Investment which is 73 per cent owned by Farid a prominent Beirut banker.

Former Lebanese Education Minister Najib Abu Haidar holds 10 per cent, Druze leader Walid Jumblatt six per cent and financier Georges Yacoub five per cent. The rest is owned by small investors.

Two of TMA's seven aircraft are currently on lease to Kuwait airlines.

Industrial Estates Corporation widens areas for expansion and development

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordanian Industrial Estates Corporation (JIEC) has appropriated a 2,000-dunum land in Karak and another 1,500-dunum plot in Aqaba to build two more industrial estates, according to JIEC Director General Assem Hindawi.

He said Tuesday that the two existing industrial estates have no more room for accommodating additional factories and businesses unless more land is bought nearby noting that the JIEC has recently used the Karak and Aqaba projects as initial steps to explore the potential for setting up industrial estates in Zarqa, Mafrag, Jerash, Ajloun, Balqa and Tafleeh.

JIEC established the Sahab Industrial City in the late 1970s and the Al Hassan Industrial City in 1991, and constructed factory buildings as well as basic infrastructure projects like water, electricity and sewage networks.

JIEC technical teams are already looking for plots of lands where future industrial estates can be established and plans are being made in cooperation with the Lands and Survey Department for that purpose, said Mr. Hindawi.

He explained that these projects, costing JD58 million, fall within the framework of the JIEC's 1996-2000 development programme which is now waiting for approval from the Council of Ministers.

Mr. Hindawi said the JIEC is planning to raise the total area of the Al Hassan Industrial City in Irbid to 1,000 dunums by simultaneously adding 500 dunums of land to the city.

IPC board discusses national investment policy

AMMAN (Petra) — Industry and Trade Minister Ali Abdul Ragheb Tuesday chaired a meeting of the IPC's board of directors to discuss the national investment policy and the work strategy of the Investment Promotion Corporation (IPC).

The board discussed various means to boost the attraction of Jordan as a centre of international investment and listened to a briefing from the IPC director on the achievements made in the areas of marketing investment, enhancing investment efficiency and achieving the required growth.

The board reviewed the proposed ideas to extend investment facilities, including taxation exemptions, to a broader sector of investors.

The meeting was attended by Tourism and Antiquities Minister Saleh Ishtaidat.

DAILY BUSINESS

A review of news from the Arabic press

Jordan Insurance Company to distribute dividends at a rate of 15%

**PREMIUMS COLLECTED by the Jordan Insurance Company last year amounted to JD 12.12 million, 10.55 per cent higher than the JD 10.96 million earned in the previous year. Net premiums generated by the marine department were JD 1.68 million, slightly less than the JD 1.75 million earned in the 1994-1995 period.

The fire department netted JD 2.85 million last year (1995-1996) compared to JD 2.65 million in the preceding year. The ratio of paid claims to the net premium in each of the two above mentioned departments was 32.34 per cent and zero per cent respectively last year compared to 33.18 per cent and 25.8 per cent in 1994-1995.

The vehicles department increased its premiums by 14.05 per cent as it earned JD 5.82 million in 1995-1996 (JD 5.11 million in 1994-1995). The ratio of paid claims to net premiums in this department was 63.15 per cent (72.55 per cent in the 1994-1995).

Another increase in net premiums earned was posted by the department of general accidents which boosted its performance by 17.32 per cent from JD 1.11 million to JD 1.34 million. There was no paid claims in this section whereas the ratio was 31.04 per cent in 1994-1995.

The company's investments in shares and bonds totalled JD 4.3 million at cost price at the end of March 1996. At the market price these shares and bonds were valued at JD 5.58 million.

According to the company's annual report the general loss in the technical departments for 1995-1996 was 30.01 per cent compared to 108.21 per cent in the previous year. The total claims paid amounted to JD 8.5 million.

The profit achieved by the Jordan Insurance Company during the April 1995-March 1996 period amounted to JD 1.92 million compared to JD 1.78 million during the previous year. As such, the general assembly approved the recommendation of the board of directors to distribute dividends at a rate of 15 per cent. The total budgeted at JD 20.4 million and the shareholders' equity at JD 7.88 million (Al Dustour + Al Aswaq).

REUTERS

REUTERS

The Business of Information

| Currency | USD | DEM | GBP | CHF | JPY | CAD | ITL | NLG | FRF |
|-------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| US Dollar | 1.4839 | 0.8504 | 1.2050 | 106.85 | 1.3748 | 1518.70 | 1.6642 | 5.0525 | |
| DE Mark | 0.6738 | | 0.4391 | 0.8121 | 72.03 | 0.9249 | 1023.11 | 1.1216 | 3.4049 |
| GB Sterling | 1.5374 | 1.5374 | | 1.8532 | 164.19 | 2.1136 | 2334.55 | 2.5882 | 7.7678 |
| CH Franc | 0.8299 | 1.2249 | 0.5388 | | 86.81 | 1.1379 | 1259.28 | 137.98 | 4.1891 |
| JP Yen | 0.0094 | 1.3878 | 0.6080 | 1.1274 | | 1.2837 | 14.20 | 155.65 | 4.7266 |
| CA Dollar | 0.7274 | 1.0777 | 0.4708 | 0.8735 | 1.28 | | 1101.84 | 1.2090 | 3.6828 |
| IT Lira | 0.0007 | 0.9757 | 0.4276 | 0.0793 | 1423.28 | 0.9027 | | 10.95 | 3.3237 |
| NL Guilder | 0.0008 | 89.11 | 0.3904 | 72.39 | 64.16 | 0.8243 | 912.20 | | 3.0349 |
| FR Franc | 0.1979 | 0.2935 | 0.1286 | 23.8491 | 21.12 | 0.2715 | 32.92 | 32.9200 | |

| Oil | Last | Previous |
|----------|--------|----------|
| Brent | 21.05 | 20.50 |
| W. Texas | 21.05 | 21.20 |
| Bony | 20.25 | 20.50 |
| Dubai | 18.25 | 18.30 |
| UL Gas | 198.00 | 199.00 |

| Currency | USD | DEM | GBP | CHF | JPY |
|-----------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| SA Riyal | 0.2686 | 0.3959 | 0.17346 | 0.32167 | 26.5087 |
| AE Dirham | 0.2723 | 0.40429 | 0.17713 | 0.32846 | 29.1129 |
| KW Dinar | 3.3434 | 4.96524 | 2.17486 | 4.03388 | 357.526 |
| BH Dinar | 0.3770 | 0.38356 | 1.72563 | 3.2 | 283.607 |
| CY Pound | 2.1627 | 3.2078 | 1.4058 | 2.6057 | 231.085 |

| Metal | Bid | Offer |
|-----------------|-------|-------|
| Gold (oz's) | 388.3 | 388.8 |
| Silver (oz's) | 5.057 | 5.07 |
| Platinum (oz's) | 399.3 | 400.3 |
| AL (3 Months) | 1512 | 1515 |
| CU (3 Months) | 1933 | 1938 |
| Zinc (3 Months) | 1042 | 1045 |
| Lead (3 Months) | 808 | 809 |
| NI (3 Months) | 6950 | 6960 |

| Cncy | Period | 1 - 3 Months | 3 - 6 Months | 6 - 9 Months | 9 - 12 Months | Year |
|------|--------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|------|
| USD | 5.34 | 5.40 | 5.53 | 5.50 | 5.75 | |
| GBP | 5.84 | 5.84 | 5.84 | 5.81 | 6.06 | |
| JPY | 0.43 | 0.65 | 0.78 | 0.79 | 1.03 | |
| DEM | 3.22 | 3.24 | 3.26 | 3.31 | 3.40 | |
| FRF | 3.68 | 3.87 | 4.00 | 3.90 | 4.09 | |
| CHF | 2.19 | 2.28 | 2.37 | 2.43 | 2.56 | |
| ITL | 8.75 | 8.56 | 8.43 | 8.31 | 8.25 | |

| Bourse | Index | Value | Chng | % Chng | High | Low | Pr Cls |
|-----------|------------|----------|---------|--------|---------|---------|---------|
| New York | DOW JONES | 5652.83 | -21.45 | -0.38 | 5674.65 | 5648.02 | 5674.28 |
| New York | S&P 500 | 656.36 | -1.87 | -0.28 | 660.23 | 658.83 | 660.23 |
| London | FT-SE 100 | 3788.4 | 0.1 | 0 | 3791.4 | 3775.4 | 3788.3 |
| Tokyo | NIKKEI 225 | 20744.88 | -332.59 | -1.58 | 20992.7 | 20742 | 21077.5 |
| Paris | CAC 40 | 1999.34 | -13.85 | -0.69 | 2008.35 | 1990.86 | 2013.19 |
| Frankfurt | DAX | 2522.47 | 1.54 | 0.06 | 2523.68 | 2515.19 | 2520.93 |

| Commodity | Unit | Delivery |
|----------------|--------|----------|
| Coffee (c/lbs) | 117.17 | Spot |
| Cocoa (S/ton) | 1391 | Spot |
| Sugar (S/ton) | 370.5 | Spot |
| Wheat (S/ton) | 194 | Spot |
| Soya (c/lbs) | 23.4 | Spot |
| Tee (sig/kg) | 108 | Spot |
| Barley (S/bsh) | 3.48 | Spot |
| Rice (S/ton) | 425 | Spot |

| Currency | Buy | Sell |
|-------------|--------|--------|
| US Dollar | 0.708 | 0.710 |
| GB Sterling | 1.0932 | 1.0987 |
| DE Mark | 0.477 | 0.4794 |
| CH Franc | 0.5882 | 0.5911 |
| FR Franc | 0.1405 | 0.1412 |
| JP Yen | 0.663 | 0.6663 |
| NL Guilder | 0.4253 | 0.4274 |
| IT Lira | 0.0467 | 0.0469 |

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

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World blasts Atlanta for commercialism, glitches

LONDON (R) — Sports officials and commentators around the world slammed the Atlanta Olympics Monday, complaining of excessive commercialism and organisational failures.

The games closed as they opened with razzle-dazzle ceremony in the host city but a gloomy verdict abroad on the sponsors and organisers.

Branded at the start by the world's press as shambolic, chaotic and "the cock-up games", Atlanta went on to stage a feast of sport but as time went on the arrangements still failed to wow international critics.

"Atlanta, despite its goodwill, organised a very weak Olympic Games," Reszo Gallo, head of Hungary's sports office and vice president of the National Olympic Committee told the Hungarian News Agency (MTI).

"Such chaos has never been seen in the three de-

cadres I have attended the games," he said.

Italian Primo Nebiolo, president of the International Amateur Athletics Federation (IAAF) hit out at the commercialism of the centennial games in Atlanta.

"I was disappointed with Atlanta. Placing one's trust in private hands is wrong," he told Corriere Della Sera newspaper.

The games, costing \$1.7 billion, were the first to be entirely privately financed.

"The prestige of the Olympic movement cannot for long endure the commercial excesses and entertainment events like beach volleyball," said Finland's biggest daily Helsingin Sanomat.

Germany singled out the doping problems which continued to cast a shadow over the games.

"Our sporting associations are called upon on the international level to commit themselves to sports free of

manipulation. Urgent action is needed here," German Interior Minister Manfred Kanther said.

There was widespread criticism of the "chauvinism" of the American media and audiences.

"The self-obsessed hosts proved themselves incapable of recognising greatness unless it came with an American passport," said columnist Tony Parsons in Britain's Daily Mirror. "Atlanta was awash with boorish crowds, bad losers and patriotism so cheap..."

"On television, one heard only about the triumphs of the Americans. At the same time, viewers in France could well ask themselves how the United States managed to sneak away so many medals since one so rarely saw one of their athletes get up on the podium," echoed France's Le Figaro.

China, which finished fourth with 16 gold medals, 22 silvers and 12 bronzes,

four bronzes less than its tally in 1992, was also highly critical of the U.S. hosts.

"These achievements were accomplished overcoming one difficulty after another, including some unfriendly U.S. media and troubles with living conditions, security and referees," the Sports Daily quoted Sports Minister Wu Shaou as saying.

Chinese sports officials in Atlanta complained about everything from the food, the accommodation and the weather to a midnight fire alarm which interrupted the athletes' sleep.

"Problems and gaffes harassed the life of Bulgarian Olympic sportsmen in Atlanta," chorused Sofia's capital weekly. It said a lack of funds on the Bulgarian side, combined with poor organisation on the U.S. side, made these games among the less successful.



Syrian Olympic gold medalist Ghada Shouaa holds her gold medal while riding in a motorcade through Damascus. Shouaa, 24, won Syria's first gold medal in the 100-year history of the Olympic Games when she triumphed in the heptathlon at the Atlanta Olympics (Reuters photo)

Syria's Olympic champion gets hero's welcome

DAMASCUS (R) — Syria's golden girl Ghada Shouaa, who made history for her country when she clinched the heptathlon gold medal at the Olympic Games in Atlanta, returned home Monday to a hero's welcome.

Shouaa, whose medal was Syria's first ever, told the tens of thousands at the airport to greet her that she would keep on playing for the gold.

"I have three Olympics to come and I hope to get the gold in these games," she said.

Defence Minister Lieutenant General Mustafa Tlas, known for his love of sports, sent Shouaa a golden cup that was presented to her by a representative at the airport.

Shouaa's parents have said they discovered their daughter's special powers when as a 10-year-old she caught a neighbour's fleeing rabbit.

The 24-year-old Shouaa won the world champion in the Swedish city of Gothenburg last year. Behind her at the Olympics were Natasha Sazanovich of Belarus, with the silver medal and Britain's Denise Lewis with the bronze.

Syria had previously won just one medal in the games when Joseph Ariyeh took a silver in wrestling at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics.

President Hafez Al Assad is expected to meet the Syrian champion to congratulate her personally, officials said.

Shouaa, who began as an international basketball player, decided to concentrate on the heptathlon a few years ago. She is now being trained by coach Kim Bukhantsev, a former Soviet discus thrower.

Shouaa said that at the beginning of the games the American audience did not encourage her "but when I started to make good results I got a lot of encouragement."

Shouaa expressed hope that a school for athletics would be opened in Syria soon to promote the sport in the country and encourage more Syrians to join it.

Shouaa, driven in an open car escorted by police and joined by hundreds of cars, passed through the streets of Damascus to greet people who lined up to salute her.

Atlanta Olympics ends to mixed reviews in China

BEIJING (AP) — After two weeks of relentless criticism, China's state-run media let up Sunday to praise organisers of the Atlanta Olympics for their efforts if not their results.

Even the bombing at Centennial Olympic Park, once touted as proof of U.S. ill-preparedness, mellowed in the minds of Chinese editorial writers as the games drew to a close.

"Security, probably the biggest concern of all before and during the games, is generally OK, except for the pipe-bomb explosion in a public park, to the general relief of the ... International Olympic Committee," the Xinhua News Agency said. "This is a big plus to the games organisers."

Xinhua decried the pervasive commercialism and assailed the "persistent undesirable transport service, occasional but annoying power blackouts and the failure to provide immediate event results."

"These drawbacks however pale before what the

games have achieved and the warmth with which the American people, especially the Atlantans, have endeavoured to make these games a success, though far below the best-of-all goal trumpeted by the organisers," Xinhua said.

Since the eve of the opening ceremonies, Chinese media have complained about the living conditions and suggested that the lack of Chinese food in the Olympic village was intended to place Chinese athletes at competitive disadvantage.

The Economic Daily said U.S. fans and announcers had been bad hosts, clapping for their own athletes and accusing the foreigners of doping.

The English-language China Daily called the bombing at Centennial Olympic Park proof that the United States had botched the games.

Many Chinese blame the United States for persuading Olympic organisers to choose Sydney over Beijing

as host of the 2000 games. Chinese leaders have also seen successes on the playing field to whip up nationalist sentiment.

With 16 gold medals in hand, fourth highest, China turned to extolling the Olympic spirit.

Wu Shaou, China's sports minister, pronounced himself "delighted" with the results, noting the medal tally exceeded expectations. Xinhua said in a separate report.

"The preciousness of gold medals is the reward of the victorious," the Communist Party's newspaper People's Daily said Sunday. "The greatness of spiritual exertion has an effect that is wider and more profound."

Not all were high-minded or forgiving. The popular Beijing Evening News said penny pinching by the U.S. organisers resulted in low-quality service and bad security.

"Atlanta, you're not so great," the newspaper said.

World Cup host critical of Atlanta games

LOS ANGELES (R) — The man who staged America's last major international sports event, the 1994 World Cup soccer finals, hit out at the organisation of the Atlanta Olympic Games, saying transport and security problems and heavy commercialism spoiled the atmosphere.

Alan Rothenberg, president of the U.S. Soccer Federation and chairman of Major League Soccer, was highly critical of the Atlanta organisers. In an interview, in Monday's Los Angeles Times, saying so many things went awry in Atlanta that the legacy of the 1996 Olympics will not be positive.

"Now that it is said and done, the centennial Olympic Games made the L.A. Olympics (in 1984) and the World Cup look even better," he said in Atlanta. "The visual recollection of the Atlanta Games is one of over-commercialisation. Too many signs, too much stuff around."

Rothenberg, a Los Angeles lawyer who was involved in staging the 1984 Olympics and headed the 1994 World Cup effort, said he felt empathy for the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG) and attacked the International Olympic Committee for hypocrisy and for the excessive commercial sponsorship of the games.

"The IOC talks out of both sides of its mouth," he told the newspaper. "They say they don't want things commercialised but then they put the price so high to get the games that they force the people putting them on to do all these commercial things."

Even while admitting that the fans enjoyed themselves, Rothenberg couldn't help but take a swipe at games planners.

"By and large the spectators had a good time — once they were able to get to the venues," he said.

"With the technological and transportation problems, you expect an occasional breakdown or two is going to occur, but to have things go on as long as they did, and to have them recur as often as they did clearly indicates a breakdown somewhere in the planning process," Rothenberg concluded.

Former doping cheats leave Atlanta with medals

ATLANTA (R) — The sight of former drug cheats being presented with Olympic track and field medals in Atlanta has destroyed notions that present sanctions are tough enough to end an athlete's career.

It has been suggested that compulsory four-year suspensions in athletics for using serious drugs like steroids are effectively equal to life bans because it is so difficult to return to the top flight after such a long time out of the sport.

The evidence from Atlanta tells another story. Nigerian long jumper Chioma Ajunwa bounced back from a four-year ban for steroids to cause one of the biggest upsets of the games with gold in the women's long jump.

American Randy Barnes was banned for two years for doping in 1990 — then the maximum penalty. In Atlanta he stood before an ecstatic American audience as Olympic shot champion.

Germany's Grit Breuer, who was involved in two controversial doping cases with ex-double world sprint champion Katrin Krabbe, ran a brilliant last leg to clinch her country a bronze medal in the women's 4x400 metres relay on Saturday.

Last year at a meeting in Gothenburg, many officials called on the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) to cut the minimum ban for serious drugs from four to two years because the present rules were not acceptable under civil law.

The IAAF's congress voted down the proposal. It is true that the laws of many countries view four years as being too long to stop someone carrying out their profession. The IAAF is likely to be forced to soften its approach in the future to avoid battles in court.

But, after Atlanta, the moral argument seems to be with those who believe all offenders should be banned for life.

But the moralists seldom get their way over the lawyers, as demonstrated by an IAAF doping decision on the eve of the athletics programme.

The IAAF, afraid of being sued, decided not to ban Australian sprinter Dean Capobianco and Italian high jumper Antonella Bevilacqua from Atlanta despite

positive drug tests.

The athletics body admitted it was embarrassing to let drug offenders compete at the games. But despite having the power to ban them, officials decided to follow their rules to the letter and put the cases to arbitration.

Capobianco did not make any impact. But IAAF chiefs must have been holding their breath when Bevilacqua just missed out on a medal in the women's high jump on Saturday.

Both athletes' results will be cancelled if they fail to win their arbitration hearings. If Bevilacqua had won a medal, Olympic chiefs could have been forced to take it away.

There was much speculation across a wide range of sports that many competitors are still cheating their way to glory. But it is clear that those athletes taking drugs are timing their abuse to make sure they are not caught during competition.

"The Olympic games do not reflect the real situation in sport," one official said. "Olympians are better informed about drugs than they used to be. At Olympics today you do not

expect many positive tests."

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) seemed on Sunday to have got itself into difficulties with the five athletes who were disqualified for positive tests during the games.

The competitors took Bromptan, a banned stimulant-cum-masking agent.

But two medallists among the five won an appeal against their disqualification on Sunday when an arbitration panel ruled that there was some credence to suggestions that they took the drug to boost their immune system, not their performance.

In what became an emotional plea for more testing out of competition, U.S. swimming coach Richard Quick said that no swimmer in Atlanta had been tested enough.

"Unfortunately every great performance has a cloud over it and I would like that cloud to go away," he said.

But it seems likely to hang there for some time until out-of-competition testing becomes part of daily life for every athlete who steps into the Olympic arena.

Sabatini returns to WTA Tour with win in Canada

MONTREAL (R) — Gabriela Sabatini returned to the WTA Tour for the first time in more than three months Monday and posted a straight sets win at the Canadian Open.

The ninth-seeded Argentine, who missed both the French Open and Wimbledon with a strained stomach muscle, eased past Canadian qualifier Sonya Jayaseelan 6-4 6-2.

In her first round play, 10th seed Amanda Coetzer of South Africa overpowered Italian Rita Grande 6-3 6-2, and 12th seed Karina Habsudova of Slovakia demolished Austrian Barbara Schett 6-0 6-0.

The other seeds to see opening-day action, American Amy Frazier (13), Nathalie Tauziat of France (15) and 16th seed Elena Likhovtseva of Kazakhstan all posted straight-set wins.

Sabatini, whose ranking has dropped to 14th, played her first competitive matches since the April Hilton Head Tournament at the Olympics, where she lost to Monica Seles.

"I didn't play very well," Sabatini said of Monday's match.

"I wasn't dictating the rallies and I served pretty badly," added the Argentine, who had three consecutive double faults during one game in the second set.

But the long layoff wasn't all bad, she insisted. Sabatini said she had lost "a couple of kilos" and claimed, "I never felt so fit in all my years on tour."

The tournament, formerly held in Toronto, marks the first event being held at Montreal's new \$18 million tennis complex.

The top eight seeds received first-round byes but all were on hand for the opening ceremony, including top seed and defending champion Seles and second seed Arantxa Sanchez Vicario as the U.S. Open tune-up season moves into high gear.

Seles made her triumphant return to the WTA Tour at this event last year. She begins defence of her title Tuesday against Katarina Studenikova of Slovakia, who beat Gala Leon Garcia of Spain 2-6 6-3 7-6.

Argentine press hails 'African hurricane'

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (R) — Argentina's press Sunday sadly accepted Nigeria's 3-2 victory over the national team in the Olympic soccer final as rewarding daring soccer of the sort the South Americans used to be known for.

"Argentina falls, trapped by its own miserly soccer" was the headline of the Nation daily. Big-selling Clarin agreed: "The team lacked the football to grab the gold."

La Nacion welcomed the aggressiveness of Africa's first Olympic soccer gold medalists, whom it described as an "African football hurricane." The Nigerians, it wrote, "must be seen as a breath of fresh air in today's suffocating and misery soccer, which is such a prisoner of static tactics."

Coverage of the match completely dominated Sunday sports sections in this soccer-mad country, pushing the rest of the Olympics

deep into the back pages.

While its sports section's front page was dominated by a large photograph of Nigerian Celestine Babayaro celebrating a goal with an astonishing back flip, La Nacion reflected on another big loss for the team of coach Daniel Passarella.

"Memories of the ineffectiveness of his teams always pop up every time they play in an international competition," it said.

Italian referee Pierluigi Collina came in for wide criticism, spiced with insulting references to his appearance, for awarding the decisive third Nigerian goal despite an Argentine attempt to catch striker Amunike offside.

"Pierluigi Collina and his sweaty bald head were always going to be remembered easily," La Prensa wrote.

But while most agreed Collina's decision was wrong, sportswriters aimed still sharper barbs at the

Argentines for their fatal mistake — an unsportsmanlike attempt to play the offside rule after a Nigerian free kick by running forward in a line.

"All the players failed by trying to play the offside rule in the 88th minute. It had never been done before, and it should never have been done," La Prensa said.

Argentina took an early lead with a scorching header by Claudio Lopez but lacked the spirit of the more powerful Africans. "The difference in attitudes did not take long to make clear the skillful play of the Nigerians and the defensive style of Passarella's team," La Nacion said.

The Olympics are the only big international soccer competition that Argentina has competed in but never won. Argentina has won the World Cup twice, but it lost in its only other Olympic soccer final, in 1928.

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YASSER ARAFAT WITH AIDES AT RAMALLAH COUNCIL MEETING: Palestinian President Yasser Arafat (seated) confers with his aides during a Palestinian Legislative Council meeting Tuesday. Mr. Arafat and his ministers slammed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over his settlements policy and failure to redeploy troops in the West Bank town of Hebron. (Reuters photo)

Netanyahu drops Rabin's Golan promise to U.S.

By David Makowski
The Jerusalem Post

THE PROPOSAL for resuming peace talks with Syria that Israel put forward to the U.S. last week excluded Yitzhak Rabin's verbal assurance to President Bill Clinton that the entire Golan Heights would ultimately be yielded, if key security concerns were met, a senior Israeli official said Monday night. The official said that Rabin had been careful not to call this assurance a commitment.

A senior U.S. official, however, said this version of events is not accurate, but refused to elaborate.

In Amman, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sounded upbeat about the possibility of resuming peace talks with Syria, after hearing King Hussein's assessment of his weekend visit to Damascus.

During Netanyahu's quick visit to Jordan, which included a stopover in Petra, the prime minister also discussed a string of proposals to bolster Israeli-Jordanian economic cooperation.

"Labour's promise to the U.S. to get off the Golan assuming Israel obtains needed security arrangements is something we cannot agree to, and we told the Americans this last week," the Israeli official said. "Otherwise, we want to meet the Syrians without preconditions. There is nothing else to our proposals."

In a rare compliment to Syrian President Hafez Al Assad, Netanyahu said at a joint press conference with King Hussein, that from what he has heard, the Syrian leader "intends to continue the search for peace with the present Israeli government."

Sources say they believe

Damascus wants assurances that "Lebanon first" would be followed by territorial withdrawal on the Golan and that it keeps its control of Lebanon. Syria has said it wants the peace talks to resume where they left off at the Wye Plantation in Maryland last February.

Netanyahu told reporters that Israel will reopen negotiations with the Palestinians in the "next few weeks" on the Israeli army's pullback in Hebron.

"In another few weeks, if the Palestinian side honours its commitments, I think we will be able to begin negotiations on the different issues still outstanding," he said. "These negotiations, in the framework of the steering committee, (will) include the issue of Hebron."

He disputed reports that the army has no alternative plans for redeployment, saying that such alternatives

are being discussed in a very small circle.

Netanyahu's remarks were the clearest to date that a Hebron pullback is not imminent. Speaking on Channel 1 last night, Labour Member of Knesset Ehud Barak predicted that Netanyahu will ultimately agree to the same sort of pullback as called for in the Oslo 2 accord, except for "cosmetic changes." As it stands now, Israel is scheduled to pull back from about 80% of the city.

During the joint press conference, Netanyahu also announced that Israel will permit another 5,000 Palestinian labourers into the country. This brings the total to around 40,000.

The Jordanian-Israeli economic aspects were the focal point of Netanyahu's meeting with Crown Prince Hassan, which was held

(Continued on page 7)

Palestinian deputy keeps open his Jerusalem office

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — A Palestinian deputy banned from running an office from his home in East Jerusalem on Tuesday was given permission to keep it open provided the office was not linked to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

"The Israeli police have given up making me close my office on the condition that I promise that it is not linked to the Palestinian Authority," Haem Abdul kader told AFP. "We have not reached agreement on the exact formula but an arrangement should be found," he added.

He said he had discussed the issue Tuesday with Amr Gluska, an official from the internal security ministry, in a meeting set up by Egyptian Ambassador to Israel Mohamed Ad Bassiuni.

A police spokesman confirmed the Gluska-Abdul Kader meeting.

On Monday Mr. Abdul Kader was handed an order prohibiting the opening of the office. It was signed by Internal Security Minister

Avigdor Kahalani. The authorities set a Monday deadline for closing the office in east Jerusalem's Beit Hanina neighbourhood or risk the use of force.

"By virtue of the Israeli law which prohibits activities by the Palestinian Authority in East Jerusalem or anywhere else in Israel, I ban you from running this office," Mr. Kahalani's order said, adding police would take the necessary measures to stop the office from opening.

But the deadline came and went as Israeli officials found themselves stumped by legal problems involved in trying to prevent Mr. Abdul Kader from meeting people in his own house, police officials said. Several Israeli police cars sat outside Mr. Abdul Kader's house on Tuesday.

Mr. Abdul Kader, who was elected to the Palestinian Legislative Council in January to represent residents of East Jerusalem, said he receives about a dozen constituents a day there on such matters as building permits and confiscated identity cards.

Abu Zeid to contest order to divorce wife

CAIRO (Agencies) — University professor Nasr Hamed Abu Zeid plans to keep fighting an order to divorce his wife for "apostasy" although the highest court in Egypt upheld the verdict, his lawyers said Tuesday.

The court of cassation, whose decisions can not be appealed, confirmed Monday a lower court's June 1995 judgement that the Cairo University lecturer must divorce his wife.

The lower court ruled that Mr. Abu Zeid's writings on religion "attacked" and "incited disrespect" for Islam, and ordered his divorce under Islamic law, saying a Muslim woman cannot be married to an apostate.

Mr. Abu Zeid, who has been in the Netherlands with his wife because of Islamists' threats since the divorce order, "does not intend to seek political asylum in that country and remains confident in his pursuit of justice," his lawyer Mona Zulfikar said.

"We are going to resort to an unusual procedure, suing magistrates for denial of justice, against the judges who handed down the decision on Monday, to get on record that it was a legal error," she said.

"It is a long battle," she added, in which the court of cassation must convene a special panel.

The procedure has never been used in Egypt to try and overturn a sentence passed by a cassation court, but has been used in a lower court of appeal, the lawyer said.

An Egyptian human rights group on Tuesday appealed to President Hosni Mubarak to intervene in the case. The appeal was made by the Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights.

The case, which was brought by Muslim fundamentalist lawyers, has caused serious concern among secular intellectuals. They see it as part of an effort by Muslim fundamentalists to enforce their interpretations of Islam via the courts.

Bosnian Croats, Muslims agree on governing Mostar

MOSTAR (AP) — Bosnian Croats and Muslims signed an agreement Tuesday on jointly governing Mostar, averting permanent division of the city and boosting chances of long-term peace across Bosnia.

"We have reached agreement, which was signed by the parties," said Dragan Gasic, a spokesman for the European Union (EU), which has been administering the southwestern city. He offered no immediate details of the agreement, which came after days of tough negotiations.

But Mijo Brajkovic, mayor of Croat-ruled west Mostar, told reporters that the Muslims had accepted Croat terms that a still-to-be-formed constitutional court rule on the validity of Mostar elections in June.

The European Union — which has administered

Mostar since 1994 — had threatened to withdraw unless Mostar's Muslim and Croat leaders agreed to abide by the results of the elections and come to terms on power-sharing.

International negotiators said the Croats were to blame for the impasse. They had boycotted city council meetings because of election irregularities. The EU had certified the elections as valid. A Muslim-led coalition narrowly won.

Mr. Brajkovic said the first joint council session would be held around Aug. 15.

The Croats have said they would attend no sessions after the initial one until the court rules. Mr. Brajkovic said the Muslims accepted that demand, but there was no immediate Muslim comment.

Had agreement eluded the

two sides because of the Croat boycott, the precedent could have been set for others not to honour results of all-Bosnian elections in September.

That would have further weakened the chances of long-term peace for Bosnia, already riven by ethnic mistrust, and increased the likelihood of renewed warfare once NATO-led peacekeeping forces leave.

The European Union had originally threatened to leave by midnight Saturday unless there was agreement. But with so much at stake, talks continued until Tuesday.

The United States, which brokered the formation of the shaky federation to end Muslim-Croat fighting in 1994, was intensely involved in back-door talks leading up to the agreement.

No talks with Kurds, Demirel insists

ANKARA (Agencies) — Turkish President Suleyman Demirel and top government ministers moved Tuesday to deny they will open peace talks with Kurdish rebels if they lay down their arms.

Mehmet Golhan, an aide to Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller and deputy leader of her True Path Party, said Monday that talks with the outlawed Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) could start if it rejected violence.

His comments marked the first time an official close to the government has openly mentioned the possibility of holding talks of any kind with the PKK.

They came after Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan twice met a writer at the weekend who is known to be close to the PKK leadership, and who could act as a mediator.

However, Mr. Demirel, quoted in the Milliyet daily, said that talks "would make Turkey an ungovernable country."

"The state will not surrender. The problem is complicated and fuelled by other countries," he added, alluding to Syria which he has accused of backing the PKK.

"The law says how armed bandits should be treated. We must not look for a reconciliation with armed individuals in the mountains, towns and plains" of Turkey.

Since the PKK began its armed struggle for a Kurdish homeland in south-east Turkey in 1984, successive Turkish governments have rejected any dialogue with the separatist group.

Mr. Golhan said on Monday: "We're not for sitting around the negotiating table with an armed gang. But if they (the PKK) leave aside arms, then there can be indirect talks" on resolving the Kurdish problem.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Prince Ali returns after Russia tour

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Ali Ben Al Hussein returned home Tuesday after a tour of the Russian Federation republics where he met with the presidents, prime ministers and parliament speakers and members of the republics. Prince Ali also visited Islamic, architectural, cultural and touristic sites and universities where he met with Jordanian and Arab students. Prince Ali was accompanied on the visit by Senator Yamil Hikmat and several Jordanian officials.

1 killed, 11 injured in Addis Ababa blast

ADDIS ABABA (AFP) — One person was killed and 11 people were injured overnight in a suspicious blast at one of the Ethiopian capital's major hotels, police said Tuesday. Witnesses to the explosion, in the bar of the government-run Wabi Shebele Hotel, had earlier said two people were killed and 17 hurt. Police said four of the injured had been taken to hospital. No one has yet claimed responsibility for the blast, the third attack on hotels in Ethiopia since the start of the year. The hotel on Sunday had hosted a fundraiser to greet the country's Olympic athletic team on its return from the Atlanta Games. Last month, Ethiopia's transport minister was injured in an attack in which a police officer and bodyguard were killed. The banned Somali Islamist group Al Itihad claimed responsibility for the attack as well as bomb blasts at two other hotels targeted earlier this year.

100 typhoid cases registered in Cairo

CAIRO (AFP) — One hundred cases of typhoid have been recorded in a village just outside Cairo including 20 in the past three days, sparking fears of an epidemic, health officials said Tuesday. The first cases were reported in the village of Makhsous near Khanka town, 15 kilometres east of Cairo, in early July, said Sayed Kossaybi, health chief for Khanka. "Now the pace is noticeably picking up," Mr. Kossaybi said, after 20 new victims were hospitalised in the past three days.

Israeli researchers report herpes breakthrough

BEERSHEBA (AFP) — Israeli researchers have developed an anti-viral ointment based on extracts from algae which they say will provide an effective treatment for herpes, according to press reports Tuesday. Researchers at Ben Gurion University in this southern Israeli city said laboratory tests on mice and rabbits had shown the cream to be effective against both the herpes simplex virus, which attacks the skin and nervous system, and another form of the virus which causes highly infectious genital herpes. Current herpes treatment usually involves the synthetic drug acyclovir, which impedes reproduction of the viral DNA. But doctors say that the medicine is expensive and can cause side effects and that there have been reports of increasing viral resistance to the drug.

Lebanon court examines election law appeal

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon's constitutional court went on Tuesday into a secret session to discuss whether to pass a petition by opposition parliamentary deputies to cancel a controversial election law passed last month. The 10-member constitutional council has 25 days to rule on the law. Beirut newspapers said the court was expected to issue its decision on Tuesday and make it public on Wednesday. Tuesday's session was the council's third since it began on July 30 studying the petition by 10 deputies to cancel the election law passed on July 11 on the basis that it discriminates between the Lebanese. A rare challenge to the Syrian-backed government, the petition argues that the law breaches the constitutional principle of equality for all citizens by setting up different electoral districts for the Christian heartland of Mount Lebanon and the rest of Lebanon. Interior Minister Michel Al Murr said in remarks published by newspapers on Tuesday that if the court ordered an amendment of the law then the polls, set to begin on Aug. 18, would be postponed one week only.



Andrew and Fergie kiss in public

LONDON (R) — Photographs of Prince Andrew kissing his former wife Sarah Ferguson in front of their two daughters were splashed across British newspapers Tuesday. The couple, who divorced four months ago, arrived at a charity golf tournament in Prince Andrew's new Aston Martin sports car, together with Princesses Beatrice and Eugenie. Pictures showed the family laughing and posing together, with Sarah clearly sporting her wedding and ruby engagement rings. British newspapers have often speculated on how close the couple are and how well they get on despite their divorce, though there is little evidence of them getting back together. On Thursday they plan to host a £25,000 (\$38,650) party for more than 300 people to commemorate 10 years of marriage.

Man drives to hospital with meat cleaver in head

LEXINGTON, Kentucky (R) — A man drove himself to a hospital emergency room with a meat cleaver embedded in his head, authorities said. Jesse James Taylor, 32, of Pikeville, Kentucky, entered a Pikeville hospital Sunday morning after a domestic dispute during which a cleaver was impaled in his skull, police said. He was airlifted to Lexington's University of Kentucky Medical Centre where the cleaver was surgically removed, police said. He was discharged Monday, the university hospital said. Mr. Taylor had also been stabbed with a butcher's knife and hit with a stick, police said. His girlfriend and a 16-year-old boy were charged with assault, police said.

Long vistas of hemp, but no high in sight

BISHOP'S STORTFORD, England (R) — If you go down to the woods today, you're in for a big surprise. Thousands of acres of England's green and pleasant land are being sown with hemp, commonly known as cannabis, for use, not as a drug, but as an industrial crop. Monitored by the government and confined to secluded areas of the country, the hemp grows up to 15 feet (five metres) high before it is harvested in the late summer months and sold to paper manufacturers, textile companies and providers of horse bedding. "Our vision is on a par with the biotech companies and the invention of the jet engine as we develop this natural fibre and take it to other markets," said Ian Low, managing director of Hemcore, Britain's leading hemp company.

Patience rewarded by Chinese bank

BEIJING (R) — The state-owned Bank of China has set limits on the time it takes to serve customers at its Beijing outlets and will compensate people for every extra minute they are kept waiting, a bank official said Tuesday. The bank would pay customers one yuan (\$0.12) for every one minute delay beyond the time limits, the official said. The bank started timing services in all its 193 outlets in Beijing from Monday, he said. The stopwatch was set at two minutes for each current account deposit or withdrawal, six minutes for each foreign currency transaction and three minutes for trading in state treasury bonds, he said.

Netanyahu remains upbeat but elusive on peace plans

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Halfway through his first 100 days in office, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rarely misses a chance to reaffirm his commitment to making peace with Israel's Arab neighbours, but he has yet to take a concrete step to achieve that goal.

In the latest performance Monday during his first official visit to Jordan since taking office in mid-June, Mr. Netanyahu revealed that he had sent Syria a proposal to resume negotiations on a "comprehensive peace."

He said the talks should include "all outstanding

matters" — apparently including the Golan Heights which Israel seized during the 1967 war and which Mr. Netanyahu has in the past vowed never to return to Syria in exchange for peace.

But the Israeli media, quoted senior officials Tuesday as stressing that the offer to resume peace talks without preconditions in no way meant Mr. Netanyahu was willing to yield on giving up the Golan — Syria's bottom line condition for signing a peace deal.

Israeli analysts saw the move as another example of Mr. Netanyahu's strategy

of seeking to calm worries over the peace process in the Arab World and the United States while remaining loyal to his staunch opposition to trading occupied Arab lands for peace.

"Just 50 days in office and Mr. Netanyahu has succeeded in being everything to everybody, at times a sheep in wolves' clothing, at other times a wolf wearing lambskin," said Yoel Marcus, political commentator for the Haaretz newspaper.

"Netanyahu resembles a juggler with five balls in the air — no ball remains in the air for long, nor do any of them remain in his hand

long enough for one to see what he is playing with," he said.

"But in politics like at the circus a juggler remains a juggler, you can enchant people for a while but eventually a ball drops."

The official Syrian media on Tuesday also scoffed at Mr. Netanyahu's offer to resume peace talks as "just fine words, hollow and hardly serious."

"Syria is not convinced by the inconsequential ideas which Mr. Netanyahu is trying to promote under the cover of a resumption of negotiations," the government newspaper Tishrin said.

In addition to the Syrian track, Mr. Netanyahu has since coming to office on June 17 repeatedly pledged to pursue the peace process begun with the Palestinians under the previous Labour government and which as opposition leader he had virulently opposed.

He dispatched his foreign minister, David Levy, to meet with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and has gradually eased the military closure imposed on the West Bank and Gaza Strip after a spate of suicide bombings six months ago.

But he has refused to meet Mr. Arafat himself and has yet to confirm he

will honour Israel's promise to withdraw from most of Hebron, the last major West Bank town still under Israeli occupation.

Another example of the Mr. Netanyahu method of dealing with controversial matters came last week when his government announced that it was lifting a four-year-old freeze on expansion of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories.

Ending the freeze was a central demand of nationalist groups which supported Mr. Netanyahu's election, but Arabs and the United States consider an increase in settlement activ-

ity a dangerously provocative move ahead of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations on a final peace settlement.

In lifting the freeze, however, Mr. Netanyahu avoided announcing any specific plans for settlement construction and stressed that the decision concerned only existing localities and not the creation of new settlements.

Predictably the ambiguity of the move drew protests from settlers and Palestinians alike, with Mr. Arafat on Tuesday angrily accusing Mr. Netanyahu of "sabotaging the peace process."